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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MR. ALLENBY'S INTRODUCTION.]

TIME'S REVENGE;

OR,

FOILED AT THE LAST.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. HUBERT ALLENBY'S REPRESENTATIVE.

The web of life is a tangled yarn, good and ill together.

SHAKESPEARE.

No one had come. Patsy had not yet returned on her mission to the "Three Jolly Plough-boys;" but then, she had been instructed by Miss Ibbotson to go to one of the shops in the village where that would cause delay. Percy had been always accustomed to run in and out of The Briers as if it were a second home, so his coming back with the girls caused no emotion of any kind to Miss Prue.

The girls took off their hats, and went into the state drawing-room. Roy departed of his own accord to his house and the inevitable chain, being a perfectly well-trained and excellently instructed specimen of doghood. They were all very anxious, but tried not to betray it. Miss Ibbotson and Fayette, however, could scarcely make a pretence of not watching the garden door through the open window.

The trees in the shrubbery hid the persons who came to the gates, but anyone approaching the house was soon revealed. Percy lingered on, and to depart, although he ought to have gone to The Briers. Mr. Arundell had some business

to arrange with an old friend in the town, and Percy made the excuse to himself that he was waiting for him to return.

It is sad that it should be so, but most young men prefer gratifying their own selfish inclinations to obeying the sterner call of duty, and Percy Darvill was not the exception that might prove the rule. The others had turned away, but Beattie still had her eyes fixed on the garden walks. Suddenly she uttered a faint cry, and pressed her hands on her side, as if to still the fluttering of her heart.

"My father!" she ejaculated, with the air of a tragedy queen.

Miss Prue darted to the window, and cautiously peered out. An exceedingly handsome man, of about eight-and-thirty or forty years of age, was walking up the garden, towards the house, in a leisurely, lordly way, as if coming at all was an act of condescension. He had an aspect of serene, suave good-nature, though he looked as if half wearied by his own experiences of life.

Although he was remarkably striking in appearance, he reached hardly the average height of men, yet he stooped perceptibly—a peculiarity which, united to a decided tendency to plumpness, detracted from his just claims to manly beauty. His face was like one of Velasquez's most finished portraits, even to the dark brown beard and long pointed moustache, trimmed to a nicety that suited well his carefully cultured person.

"That is not your father," said Miss Ibbotson, almost with a snort. "Unless it is a singular case of metempsychosis—which isn't likely, that sort of thing being out of fashion. Your father is about ten years older, my dear,

about a head taller, and never was half so good-looking. He may have changed, though, as I haven't seen him for nearly twenty years."

Fayette crept to Beattie's side, to look at the stranger. He presently disappeared round the sharp angle of the house which concealed the porch, and in a minute or two, Phoebe entered with a card on the salver, presenting the pasteboard envoy with ceremony to Miss Ibbotson.

"Mr. Gerald Allenby," Miss Ibbotson read aloud, *pro bono publico*. "Your father's uncle, Beattie my dear," she added, in an Irish aside.

Nobody could make any remark, for Mr. Gerald Allenby walked into the room almost on the heels of the youthful Phoebe. From his half-closed eyes he swept a searching glance round on the little party, returning with interest the eager looks bent on him. As his gaze fell upon Percy Darvill his face clouded, but he instantly transferred all his attention to Miss Ibbotson, who stood up, waiting to receive him.

Percy opened his eyes very wide, and stared at the stranger with as unamiable an expression as a good-looking young man's face could assume—an expression of anger mingled with displeased surprise.

"Madame," said Mr. Allenby—he had a peculiarly clear, sweet voice and marked, rather drawing intonation, "I have the honour to wait upon you as the representative of Sir Hubert Allenby. May I take it for granted that you have received a letter from him?"

"I received one yesterday morning," Miss Ibbotson replied, politely. "Pray be seated. You are—are—the—a near relative of Sir

Hubert Allenby's, I presume, if I may judge by your name?"

There was a slight, momentary pause. Miss Prue's nose reddened: it always did if she felt embarrassed. Mr. Allenby looked down for an instant, then looked up again, and answered, calmly:

"You are correct in your surmise, madame. I am his uncle. You, I suppose, are Miss Ibbotson?"

Miss Prue bowed.

"I trust Sir Hubert is well?"

"Not particularly well—but there is nothing seriously the matter with him. The climate of India has not agreed with him. His wife—"

"His wife? I was not aware he had a wife!" sharply interrupted Miss Ibbotson, in her brusque way, her company manner swept aside by her strong feeling of astonishment.

Mr. Allenby elevated his eyebrows in innocent surprise.

"Ah, indeed? He married—some time ago in India—ahem. Lady Allenby is not very well—ahem—she is very delicate and excitable, the nervous system is not so—"

"Just so," Miss Ibbotson said, drily.

She was out of humour, and generally out of sorts, and although this gentleman was very good-looking, and fastidiously dressed, smooth and shiny as some soft-plumaged bird, and absolutely polished in manner—three qualifications ordinarily calculated to win the most obdurate feminine heart—she did not like him. Prejudice, no doubt; but she felt as if she should not be ill-used to see him pitched out of the window.

"Too polite by half. Too pretty. Looks at his nails, and pulls his moustache, and is full of conceit. But after all, what does it matter to me?" were her rapid conclusions.

"May I ask if either of these young ladies is the Miss Allenby of whom I am in quest?" inquired Mr. Allenby, smiling, and showing the edges of a very white, regular range of teeth against his dark brown moustache.

Miss Ibbotson made a sign to Beattie, who advanced. Mr. Allenby's dark, brilliant eyes had fixed anxiously on Fayette, and a shade of disappointment passed over his visage, as he was obliged to look from the delicate, gentle girl to the tall stately creature who boldly faced him with a sort of "Sono Regina" look and attitude.

The smile by no means faded from his lips, however. He rose from his chair, looked at his young relative blandly, and murmured a few unintelligible sentences, while he pulled the long ends of his moustache in a half nervous, half defiant way.

Beattie decided offhand that she liked him. He was so distinguished-looking; he had the air of a prince, and she had never seen anyone whom she considered worthy to compare with him. Even his soft, clear, metallic voice favourably affected her.

There is no doubt that pride in the object does form a predominant element in human affection. Mr. Allenby bent a searching, piercing glance upon Beattie, which she smilingly returned, without the slightest reserve. He slightly bit his pether lip, and turned to Fayette with an inquiring look.

"Miss Charlotte Lascelles, a young relative of mine," Miss Ibbotson frigidly said.

Fayette stood, outwardly calm, and bowed her head.

"Mr. Percy Darvill—Mr. Gerald Allenby," Miss Ibbotson concluded.

Mr. Allenby nearly shut his eyes, then allowed his glances to travel over Percy Darvill—a kind of slow progressive inspection, most impertinent, and hard to bear patiently.

"I fancy I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Percy Darvill before," he drawled, dwelling on every syllable with a slow, sleepy tone.

"I fancy so—I believe so," was Percy's response, delivered in as drawing and insulting a tone.

Both men seemed to consider the pleasure nothing to boast of, and that the reciprocity lay on neither side. Everybody sat down again, making a formal little semi-circle. Hitherto the dialogue had been conducted on the principle of those impracticable guides to conversation in double columns published for the benefit of intending tourists.

To a keen observer, Mr. Allenby would have seemed like one come from a hostile camp, noting every minute detail of his enemy's fortifications. He began pulling out his moustache again, eyeing Beattie with an occasional stealthy glance, as the Wolf might have eyed Red Riding Hood. He also glanced keenly at Percy Darvill, and from him to Fayette.

"I beg to inform you, Mr. Allenby," Miss Ibbotson remarked, after a short, awkward pause, "that as I had notice only yesterday of the proposed removal of my young charge, Beattie, I shall not be able to let her go for two or three days at the least."

"I supposed it would not be civil, and would be willing to say I am sorry for that," Mr. Allenby replied.

"As to letting her go to-day, it is utterly impossible—quite out of the question."

"My instructions were," Mr. Allenby responded, with an odd kind of smugness, humility, and speaking in the soft, half-drawling way that seemed habitual with him—"the ladies, I may say, of all concerned, were, that I should be guided by circumstances. My nephew—Miss Beattie's father—sent you a thousand apologies and excuses for not coming himself. I was to come, to see, and submit to be conquered, no matter what my own inclinations might be. I am at your disposal, and at Sir Hubert's. What do you propose doing, madame?"

"It is a most uncomfortable thing for me losing this child at this moment. She has been to me almost as a daughter—certainly a younger sister. If she wishes she can go with you, but," guided by an imploring glance from Beattie, who did not wish to be spirited away in such haste, "you must really wait for two or three days. I regret to say I cannot offer you any accommodation, but—"

"I suppose I can take mine ease at mine inn, if I can find as hospitable in this rural region?" Mr. Allenby pleasantly suggested as she hesitated.

"The 'Three Jolly Ploughboys' is a very convenient place if you must remain. The people there are very civil."

"Hien. To the 'Three Jolly Ploughboys' I shall hie. The name, if vulgar, sounds jovial and hospitable. I suppose I shall find bread and cheese and ale and a shake down of some sort. On what day will my dear young relative permit me to enjoy the felicity of conducting her to the long arms of her father?"

"We will let you know to-morrow. I am sorry to cause you any inconvenience, but really I think I have a right to consider myself rather hardly used in having all my arrangements upset," Miss Ibbotson growled.

Fayette, who had withdrawn to the other end of the room, standing by the window overlooking the garden at the back of the house, saw Patsy coming along the walk leading to the house. The woman, perceiving her, looked up and smiled. But Fayette could make no guess as to what kind of message she brought.

"I will telegraph to Sir Hubert," Charles Allenby was remarking, when her thoughts came back. "No doubt he will be quite satisfied. Certainly, he could have no reason to object. He is naturally most anxious to see his daughter—his only child—but at the same time—"

"Doubtless. As he has not seen her for nearly eighteen years, and has scarcely taken the trouble to write to her all that time, his impatience must be nearly at fever heat by now," flashed up Miss Ibbotson.

Beattie's relative stroked his brown moustache with a very white hand, on which sparkled one magnificent diamond from a snake ring.

"We ought not to wonder at our neighbours' horses being splashed till we learn what roads they may have travelled by," he remarked, his soft tone of mild rebuking charity contrasting

pleasantly with the vinegary accents of Miss Prue.

"I admit that I may be unjust," the lady replied. "And I need not mind having to wait a little while longer for the explanation of what has been to a certain extent a mystery. Patience is a fine virtue, worthy of cultivation. I have always taken it for granted that although Sir Hubert Allenby—but, of course, these things cannot be discussed in open court."

The old-fashioned gilt timepiece first chimed the three quarters, then followed it by seven "tings." From which Miss Ibbotson understood the afternoon had arrived at thirty minutes past one. She wished to invite both gentlemen to remain to luncheon, which was always served at this hour, or perhaps a little earlier. But Patsy had been out, and Miss Prue did not know that she had returned.

Phoebe was an unusually stupid girl, and "there was no trusting her." Somebody must see that everything was right before she could venture to admit a critical guest like Mr. Allenby to the dining-room. It would be impossible to tell off Beattie for the service, so Miss Prue made a telegraphic sign to Fayette.

A faint sigh of relief escaped Fayette as she softly rose and glided from the room. She knew that Patsy had come back, but then the old servant might not comprehend that so especially important a visitor had come. She slipped downstairs into the dining-room and cast a rapid look around. Everything seemed right.

Miss Prue was extremely particular about her domestic arrangements, and was ably seconded by Patsy, so that every day the table was laid with as much precision as it would be for royalty itself. Fayette made one or two slight alterations among the flowers heaped in gleaming glass vessels, and then went in search of Patsy.

As a matter of necessity Patsy must be at the top of the house, or somewhere absolutely out of sight and hearing. Fayette knew she could have only a few minutes; she went back to the dining-room and touched the bell rather sharply in her impatience. Phoebe came in answer.

"Ask Patsy to come here—quick, please," said Fayette.

"Don't you feel well, miss? You do look that white," remarked Phoebe, standing by the door in stolid, slow sympathy.

"Never mind. I am well, thanks, Phoebe. Please be quick, will you?"

Fayette had a charmingly sweet, soft, persuasive way with her, and either of the servants would have done anything to help or oblige her. Phoebe, wondering a little—she knew nothing of the sudden changes—went out. Fayette poured some sherry into one of the glasses and drank it, frightened by her unusual symptoms, then sat down and waited, unconsciously tapping the carpet with the heel of her slipper in her impatience. Patsy came in, Fayette rose, then sat down again.

"Patsy, a gentleman has come—Beattie's uncle—he is going to take her away. My aunt, I believe, wishes to ask him to stay to luncheon. Will you tell her it is ready; but first—first—please tell me—you have seen Mrs. Lascelles?" stammered Fayette.

"No, Miss Fayette. She was in bed, but sent down a bit of a note. Here it is."

The note was addressed to Miss Ibbotson. Fayette looked at it, wondering, wondering what might be inside.

"No letter for me?" she said.

"No, miss."

"No message, Patsy?"

"No, miss."

"Are you quite sure?"

"As sure as can be. Did you expect any, miss?"

Fayette looked at her, the delicate, sensitive lips quivering as those of a child tremble when it is hardly able to restrain its fast coming tears.

"Don't mind me, Patsy," she said. "Miss Ibbotson will wonder why we don't announce luncheon, and imagine something is wrong."

"Something is wrong, Miss Fayette, or you'd never have that queer, white face. What is it, dearie? Tell me. You know I'd never

repeat a word if you told me not to. Come. You know you've always told poor Patsy all your worries and bothers."

"I can't tell you this."

"The greatest of all, it seems," quoth Patsy, gazing her wistfully.

"Yes, yes, yes. You are right," murmured Fayette. "Patsy."

"Go on, dearie."

"Patsy, I am so wicked," was Fayette's next remark, as startling as irrelevant.

"You—you! little angel? What wicked thing did you ever do in your life?" What do you mean?" exclaimed Patsy.

A dry, gulping sob escaped Fayette.

"Yesterday, Patsy, you know, those two letters came."

"I know, I know."

"One was—from my mother."

"My goodness! Lor hev mussey on me, miss. I didn't know as how you'd got one."

"I thought—everybody thought, I believe, that she died when I—when I was a baby. But she is living—and I felt, oh, I felt so happy, for though Aunt Prue and everyone else has always been so kind yet—yet I dreamt so often of my mother. There's nobody like a mother, is there, Patsy?"

"No, love; nobody. Well?"

"I have sometimes felt so envious. My heart seemed to be compressed somehow when I have seen the young girls in the village with their mothers, though I have seen them so often sometimes too—"

"And cuffed,"

"Yes." Fayette laughed a little wintry laugh. "Only the day before yesterday I went into Mrs. Wray's cottage to see how she was. I saw her kissing and playing with her baby, and Elizabeth was standing looking so glad, so happy, by her. So I thought if I could but have had my mother. And I have seen her, and she said never a word to me, and now she does not write a line. And it wrings my heart."

"Come, come; you mustn't cry. You'll make your nose and eyes red, and then Miss Prue will be that cross, and what'll the fine new gentleman say? Come, come, then; you mustn't be silly," said Patsy, at her wits' end. "You've seen her? Where? When?"

"Last night."

"What! Is it—it isn't this Mrs. Lascelles at the Ploughboys?"

"Yes. And she seemed so hard and so cold. But, Patsy, I must not talk to you. Let me go."

"And she is—going to take you away, honey?" asked Patsy, anxiously.

"That is what she has come for. But, oh! I am so wicked not to feel glad that my mother has come. Perhaps I shall feel glad and happy when she takes me in her arms and kisses me, as she is sure to do. Last night she was hurt, she slipped over the stile. She was in pain, and it is a cruel of me to grumble at her, isn't it, Patsy?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Poor little bird."

Patsy took Fayette in her plump arms and squeezed her very close in a fond embrace.

"Never mind; it's sure to be all right, love. I'm only a poor servant, and couldn't be no good to anybody, but if you ever wants a friend, you write to me and I'll help you all I can. You won't forget that, will you?"

"You are very kind and good to me. Thank you for all your kindness and forbearance."

"Nonsense! Plummery! You know, even if I go away from here when Miss Prue gets married, if you writes to mother or my brothers, I'll be sure to hear."

A little silvery peal of chimes, followed by the same, rang through the room.

"Oh, Patsy! I've been down nearly twenty minutes. Please, please run up and tell Auntie luncheon is ready."

Fayette had, perhaps foolishly, shown to Patsy a part of the care and anxiety that pressed upon her heart. But she dared not hint a word of that frightful shadow of sin and shame that lurked in the head behind the cold forbidding figure of the woman who claimed her.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGARET LASCELLES.

There are no tricks in plain and simple faith.
SHAKESPEARE.

MR. GERALD ALLENBY was fatigued, and a little hungry, too, after his journey. So he graciously and gracefully accepted Miss Prue's offer of hospitality. Miss Prue, hard, unsympathetic, keen and suspicious, watched him furtively.

She admitted that he was extremely handsome, irreproachable in manner, and outwardly everything that was attractive. But she did not like him, for all that. Why or wherefore, she could not tell. On the Doctor Fell principle, perhaps.

Beattie was dazzled, though her heart did not go out to this new-found relative. But, of course, an uncle was not like a father. There was no need to be fond of an uncle—especially when he didn't look like one's preconceived idea of what an uncle ought to be. A great uncle, too; it was rather confusing. He ought to look twice as old and twice as grey as Mr. Arundell, and twice as grave and dignified.

Mr. Arundell seemed just made to be an uncle, or even a father, with his serious way of speaking, and his aspect suited to express either tenderness or stern resolution. If Beattie's wishes had been consulted, she would have elected that her unknown father should be the counterpart of Mr. Arundell, and she would have dispensed with an uncle—unless he could be just such another as Doctor Langley.

However, Gerald Allenby took the trouble to pay great court to her, and as she had hitherto not felt herself a person of any particular importance, even to Percy Darvill, she felt a glow of pride and a certain sense of exultant gratification, caused by the presence of the new-comer, and she was grateful, accordingly.

It was a painful revelation to Percy, this discovery that Gerald Allenby was a near kinsman of Beattie's. An electric battery of unpleasant shocks had been directed against this inoffensive young man since yesterday.

A few scores lay unsettled between himself and Gerald Allenby. And although he was under no immediate anxiety for their arrangement, he was ill-pleased to find that he was nearly related to Beattie's father, and that he appeared to come armed with full authority over the movements of Beattie in the name of that father.

Fayette managed to regain external composure before re-appearing. She was very pale, but as for the moment she occupied an entirely subordinate position, no one particularly noticed her. As the rest moved to go to the dining-room, she seized the opportunity to slip Margaret Lascelles' note into Aunt Prue's hand.

Mr. Allenby was speaking to Beattie with a fatherly and generally near-relatively and protective air, perfectly engaging to a jealous lover excluded from the dialogue. Percy Darvill had stalked discontentedly to one of the windows overlooking the garden at the back of the house, and was glowering like an ill-used, insulted, utterly neglected, forgotten and forlorn individual, slowly and maliciously picking a big red rose to atoms, and scattering its remains on the carpet.

"Patsy brought this. She did not see—the lady," murmured Fayette, straightening a great dish of roses on the table near her, to hide the expression she felt coming into her face.

Miss Ibbotson hastily tore the note open, glanced swiftly over the contents, and then gave it to Fayette.

"She is sorry she could not keep her appointment. Wishes to see us some time this afternoon at the Ploughboys," how I detest the vulgar name of that place! We will go with Mr. Allenby. It is very awkward, his going there, after all. But it can't be helped. She is your mother, you see, child. You might have known the writing from the letter of yesterday."

True. But Fayette had not thought of that. Not one word for her, then! Apparently, not one kind message. Fayette's heart swelled with pain, and she drew two or three short, half-sobbing breaths, which nearly choked her. The little party crossed the hall, a discontented cavalcade, through the lilies and bright flowers heaped up in huge old-fashioned china jars, and went into the dining-room. Percy had not intended to remain, but now he felt himself unable to go.

Gerald Allenby was pleasant, affable, conversational, evidently determined to shine at his best. Percy Darvill almost began to feel ashamed of playing sulky bear, having no visible provocation to complain of. Beattie was glowing with girlish excitement.

Fayette was afraid of thinking for a moment, trying to kill the sensation of pain at her heart, while Miss Ibbotson was obliged to make a pretence of kindness and courtesy at her own table. So by degrees the constraint wore off in some degree, and the party became more genial.

Miss Ibbotson almost forgot her first suspicions. After all, she argued, it is natural to doubt a stranger, especially one who had come unexpectedly, unannounced even, come to take from her one of the charming young girls who had for sixteen or seventeen years been her daily companions.

Now that she was about to lose them she over-valued Beattie and Fayette. The gay sparkle of the one, the gentle sweetness of the other, assumed suddenly a tenfold attraction in her eyes. Why, when the question was reconsidered, should she cherish rancorous sentiments towards so graceful, so courteous a gentleman—the one who, next to her father, was Beattie's most natural protector?

So Miss Ibbotson melted to amiability, and tried to bring out her best airs and graces to atone for her primary distrust. Thus are the wisest and most cautious of us momentarily blinded by the golden dust thrown in our eyes. Beattie was like one under the influence of a spell. She wondered if her father resembled this only too delightful uncle. She forgot all her forebodings; she forgot all about the dead bird; all about Fayette's troubles; she was like one intoxicated with nectar, and her elated imagination floated on the wings of hope.

Fayette could think of nothing but the approaching interview with her mother. Her pale and anxious face was not noticed, however. She was nobody. Percy Darvill, carried away like the rest by the fascination of manner, addressed consolatory remarks to himself.

A strong barrier had hitherto stood between himself and this man. Gerald Allenby hated him for several reasons; there was a bitter feeling of animosity on both sides, indeed. But now Mr. Allenby must see that they need not continue a foolish enmity. Affairs had taken a new turn; in truth it might be that Percy would find it indispensable to court the favour of this important personage. An exasperating prospect, but love makes a man mean as it can render him noble.

By the time that simple little midday repast was over, Beattie was half in love with her uncle. Percy Darvill had crushed down his own dislike and mistrust, and Miss Ibbotson was prepared to defend the new-comer—not against all the world, for nobody wanted to accuse him—but against herself, which was far more conclusive.

They arose from table the best friends imaginable, these four; Fayette belonged to another world now. Percy obligingly took his departure. Possibly he might return in the evening, when he thought Mr. Arundell might come. The old ladies at The Briars were in such feeble health that they were seldom equal now to enduring any society for an entire evening.

When he went away Miss Ibbotson suggested to Gerald Allenby that as she and Fayette had business which would take them to the "Three Jolly Ploughboys," it might be a good plan to walk there; it was only a very short way.

Gerald Allenby cheerfully agreed. He was

resolved on being amiability itself; but he would infinitely have preferred remaining where he was. He was keenly anxious to know what Beattie was like.

Fayette went upstairs with Aunt Prue to get her hat. Beattie was left alone with her new-found relative. By this time, however, she felt as if she had known him for years. The two stood in the porch of the sitting-room communicating between the dining-room and Miss Prue's little private study or work-room.

The pigeons, accustomed to receive largesse from the hands of the ladies about this hour, came fluttering down, perching or strutting to and fro at a little distance, shy at sight of a stranger. Mr. Allenby did not speak for a few minutes. His eyes were steadily fixed on the open, candid face of the young girl as if he would read her every thought.

"So, my dear niece," he smilingly said, pulling the long ends of his brown moustache reflectively, "I am not to be allowed to carry you off by storm. Your father will be disappointed, so will Lady Allenby."

There was a strange inflection in his voice as he pronounced the last words.

"Lady Allenby?" repeated Beattie, startled. "Who is she, uncle?"

"Why, bless my soul, don't you know? Why your father's wife?"

"My father's wife?" echoed Beattie. "I did not know—I did not know he was married."

"Did you not?" lightly answered Gerald Allenby, still smiling and drawing the ends of his moustache through his white fingers, the sparkle of his diamond ring, scintillating at every movement. "Dear me, how strange. Queer world, isn't it, Beattie, my dear child?"

"What kind of—of person is my step-mother?" asked Beattie, her thoughts in a whirl.

"Really, I can't say. An awful swell—Dido Queen of Carthage, and all the queens of ancient Egypt and mediæval England kind of person, you know. I'm such a bad hand at describing people. Never can guess people's ages, you know, and never can say whether people are stout or thin, short or tall. I really don't know much about Lady Allenby. They have been in India, you know—I suppose you know—and I have not seen Sir Hubert for seventeen or eighteen years."

A stepmother! And Beattie had fancied herself about to commence reigning as queen-regnant over her father and his household. Miss Ibbotson and Fayette came back at this moment. Beattie was to stay at home during their absence, and amuse herself as she pleased.

It was a delicious day, bright and exhilarating, the great heat of the mid-summer having been fanned away by soft breezes.

But not one of the three who passed into the glowing, kindly sunshine received the slightest impression of the beauty of air or earth. Gerald Allenby told Miss Ibbotson of Beattie's surprise to hear that her father had married again. Miss Ibbotson looked at him.

"I don't wonder at her amazement," said she, tartly. "I had no idea of anything in the way of a second marriage. Of late years he has only written a line or so at rare intervals. So! Beattie has a stepmother. I hope she will be kind to the poor girl."

"I hope so," replied Mr. Allenby, in an ambiguous tone. "She asked me—Beattie asked me what sort of woman Lady Allenby is. I could not tell her that her father's second wife is as proud as Lucifer, and has Satan's own temper. I believe she leads my poor wretch of a nephew the deuce and all of a life."

Miss Ibbotson stopped and faced Gerald Allenby. In her own undemonstrative way she was very excitable.

"Great heaven! Well, it can't be helped. If I wished it—if it were in my power to make a home for her, I could not withhold the girl from her father if he wants to have her."

"Certainly not. But I fancy Miss Allenby has a will of her own," replied Gerald Allenby; but Fayette had lingered a little in arrear, and did not hear these remarks.

The "Three Jolly Ploughboys" was a quaint,

old-fashioned inn, with a rambling, ornamental garden, partly visible from the roadway. Great aged trees embowered the place, except just in front, where one solitary elm stood by the horse-trough.

A peacock was screaming at one end of the garden, and pigeons, poultry, ducks appeared to overrun the grounds in ornithological profusion. The building was more of a farm-house in appearance than an inn. It lay now sleepily in the glowing sunlight. Not a human being was in sight; only the bipeds gave token of life, and they seemed three-quarters asleep.

Miss Ibbotson knew something of the people and of the place, and knew it was no time to stand on ceremony, so walked in through an open door to a cool, shady passage, at the end of which a glimpse of the garden, with its wilderness of summer roses, looked like a lovely picture in a dark frame.

To the left was the bar, to the right the bar parlour, clean as a Dutch housewife's best room, redolent of the delicious scent of the crimson and white roses heaped in great old-fashioned china jars and vases.

The place seemed like one of those enchanted houses and castles in the old fairy tales and children's romances—utterly uninhabited. Miss Ibbotson gave a sniff of impatience. Gerald Allenby lounged in the porch, a martyr to circumstances, slowly swinging his elegant silver-mounted cane and fro in his pale mauve-kid gloves.

Fayette crept into the parlour, and sat down on the hard horsehair sofa. Her limbs felt as if giving way under her, and even after her walk in the sunshine she was deathly cold. Miss Ibbotson coughed—a dry, irritable cough, then pranced to the door overlooking the large garden. At a little distance the portly figure of the landlady came suddenly into view, and then advanced.

"I beg your pardon, mem, I'm sure," she cried, when she caught sight of the tall, spare form of her visitor. "Good afternoon, mem. I hope I see you well? I've been gathering a few strawberries, mem."

"Oh, indeed," Miss Ibbotson did not take the slightest interest in this account. "I have called with my—my—Miss Lascelles, to see, hem—hem—to see a lady who, I believe, is staying here."

"To be sure, to be sure. The lady who hurtled her foot, she is upstairs. I'll send up word."

"And this gentleman," Miss Ibbotson pursued, drawing back to allow the landlady to see Gerald Allenby, "wants a room for a couple of days, if you can let him have one."

The landlady dropped a curtsy to the fine gentleman, and began wiping her fingers on her print apron.

"To be sure; oh, yes, my second front room isn't let. I'm sure I should be delighted, sir. Will you step up and look at it?"

"It's sure to do," said Gerald Allenby, impatiently. "Any place will do."

"Sare-ah!" cried the landlady, shrilly. The young girl who had assisted Margaret Lascelles to reach the "Three Jolly Ploughboys" after her fall, suddenly appeared, gnome-like.

"Run up and tell the lady Miss Ibbotson—she knows your name, mem, I suppose?—and one of the young ladies wants to see her. Come in here, mem, and sit down," the landlady continued. "Oh, Miss Fayette, how do you do, miss? I hope you're quite well? Mercy, you do look pale. Ain't you well, my dear? You mostly have such a lovely colour, if I might be excused taking the liberty of so saying."

"My niece is not very well this morning," Mrs. Sheppard, said Miss Ibbotson.

"Poor little thing! I am so sorry. The heart, belike. I've often known it to be like that. I sometimes has the spasms at the heart myself, so I can feel for another, you know, mem. Oh, it's very awkward to have anything the matter with the heart."

Sarah re-appeared at the door with a request that the ladies would "walk up." Fayette rose, but turned ghastly white. Her heart throbbed to suffocation, and she clutched at the back of the hard sofa as if in fear of falling.

"Come, come, come; this will never do,"

whispered Miss Ibbotson, half sternly, half encouragingly.

Mrs. Sheppard ran across the passage and returned in a moment with something in a glass, which, before Fayette realised her intention, she made the young girl swallow. It was some very strong kind of cordial, and had the effect of bringing back the lovely carnation tint to Fayette's cheeks.

"Poor child!" said Miss Ibbotson, compassionately, turning to Gerald Allenby. "I had no idea she was so emotional."

"A little mystery, apparently?" he observed, in his suave accents.

Miss Ibbotson had forgotten that he knew nothing of Fayette, and that just at present she scarcely desired him to know her history. Yet he must learn her story sooner or later. Why not be frank and tell him in a few words, and have done with it?

If there is one thing more bothering than another, it is being driven into a corner and forced to weigh consequences and decide as to which is the more advisable course—to speak or to remain silent?

Speak, and the word goes forth which may never be brought back by the mythical coon and six horses of the proverb. Be silent, and any time the result may prove that it was ten thousand pities the truth was not told in time.

Miss Ibbotson had no leisure for reflection. She must go upstairs with Fayette. It was painfully embarrassing this approaching interview. Miss Ibbotson had never seen Margaret Lascelles since the days when they were both very young girls—before Angelina had run away with the eldest son of Sir Hyde Allenby, and left her name to be bandied about like a dead leaf kicked along a bye-path in autumn.

However, she steadily pursued her way up the narrow dark stairs to the door indicated by Mrs. Sheppard, who remained planted on the mat in the passage to see the ladies went right. The door was slightly ajar, and a streak of light came through, falling on the dim landing. Miss Ibbotson, who of course took the lead, tapped one rap.

"Come in," said an affectedly sweet voice—a voice naturally sharp and querulous, but sedulously attuned to melody.

(To be Continued.)

EXCENTRICITIES.

EXCENTRIC people add a pungent flavour to the dish of social life. They certainly do some extraordinary things. The celebrated Lessing having missed money at different times without being able to discover who took it, determined to put the honesty of his servant to a trial, and left a handful of gold on the table. "Of course you counted it?" said one of his friends. "Counted it?" said Lessing, rather embarrassed. "No; I forgot that." Philip Fitzgibbon was supposed to possess more accurate and extensive knowledge of the Irish language than any person living, and his latter years were industriously employed in compiling an Irish and English dictionary, of four hundred quarto pages, which he left completed with the exception of the letter S, and that he appeared to have totally forgotten. A century ago, there lived in London a tradesman who had disposed of eleven daughters in marriage, with each of whom he gave their weight in halfpence as a fortune. The young ladies must have been bulky, for the lightest of them weighed fifty pounds two shillings and eightpence! The great Duke of Marlborough, though a genuine hero in the great affairs of life, frequently walked home to avoid the expense of hiring a sedan chair—prior sixpence!

No. PHILIP, a girl who puts her hands in her ulster-pockets does not intend for you to take her arm and walk off with her; but she won't mind if you do, and she won't call the police.



[ON THE WATCH.]

AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"

"The Mystery of His Love," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVI.

That village maiden was my wife—
I loved her dearer than my life;
She won my trusting, boyish heart,
But soon we were compelled to part.

THE younger brother, he who had hitherto been known as the Earl of Llandudno, leaned back and frowned sternly when his elder brother confessed to his marriage with a peasant and his desire to discover the child that was born of the marriage.

"My good fellow," he said, "I recollect your infatuation for a girl in a remote Irish village, when you were visiting Lord Clondell at Athlone Castle, and I remember that we at home, my parents and myself, were much afraid that you would marry her; but still you came home as if nothing had happened, joined your regiment, went to India, and then, in less than six months, came the bitter news of your death in battle."

"It was a false return," the elder brother answered, gloomily. "It was supposed that my body had been flung into the river with numbers of others, which became food for fishes; but I was all the while being marched across the country by a horde of savage robbers. I will at another time relate the story of my captivity and sufferings, but at present I want to be explicit about my marriage with Mary Moore. She was the dream of my youth, the one love of my life, and she died believing that I was careless of her. News, indeed, had reached her of my death, but I had taken with me the proofs

of our marriage. I was afraid to trust them with her, and she could not show her certificate or prove herself a wife. She had, it is true, confessed to the parish priest that she had married Thomas, Lord Evesham, in a London city church, for she had joined me in London. I sent her to lodge with some respectable people under a false name, and the next morning I met her at the door of the church. But she was a pure, simple country girl, and I was a young coward, afraid of the wrath of my father, who had always—you know it well—been severe and tyrannical.

"Thus I told poor Mary a falsehood. I did not let her know the real name of the church, nor of the man who had married us. I gave her wrong names, and the poor child was so loving, so simple, and so trusting, that she thoroughly believed me. We were married, and lived together in perfect love for a few weeks in a lovely nook in Kent. We passed by my true family name as Mr. and Mrs. Evesham. After that my regiment was suddenly ordered on active service, and just at the time when I had spent nearly all my ready money. Although I was Lord Evesham, and heir to the earldom, my father kept me almost as short of cash as if I had been the son of a poor country curate. Still, I had about five hundred pounds of my mother's, and this I lodged in my wife's name in an office called the Booksellers' Company, to which there was a bank attached. I was a young idiot. I never told my wife of this, and I had a boyish notion of astonishing her by enclosing her a deposit note for the whole amount after I had once landed on Indian soil. Meanwhile I gave her forty pounds, told her to live quietly in the country, and that she should hear from me by every mail.

"I also told her what I believed to be true—that I should return to England in less than twelve months, and that by that time I should be entitled to a fortune left me by my uncle, and that I would then risk all and acknowledge my marriage, even at the risk of totally offending my father. You know, my dear brother, that if

I married against our father's will he had the power of absolutely confiscating that inheritance, but not if it had once come actually into my possession, and I myself, young and boyish in character, thought myself very wise in keeping all this knowledge from my young and childish wife. I acted like an idiot, and suffered accordingly, and my wife and child suffered also, which neither of them deserved. I went to India, and before I could even write to my wife I was called into action and taken prisoner, reported dead, and was lost to her for ever. What could she do when this sad news reached her? She was living quietly as I had told her to do in the little village in Kent, but I had been gone some time, and she had spent nearly all the money I had left her.

"She was so overwhelmed with grief and despair when the news of my death reached her that she had no longer any wish to live. She did not care to prove herself Lady Evesham; she knew that I had always, selfish wretch that I was, wished that fact concealed, and in a sort of blind, unreasoning way she went on concealing it. She had a wish to get back to her native Galway village, and there to die. Hers was a simple, trusting soul, whose nature was to love, and little else. She actually returned to Ireland without first going to London to seek out the certificate of our marriage. When she returned to Clondell she found herself greeted with scorn and cold looks by her former friends, and when she told them she was lawfully married and was asked to prove it she gave the false names which I had given her of church and clergyman. The parish priest wrote for them, and found there were no such names, and Mary, my wife, who was after all dearer to me than life, was driven to the workhouse. There our child was born, and Mary, Lady Evesham, lies in a pauper's grave."

The narrator paused, overcome by his emotion. The younger brother coolly lighted a cigar, and said:

"It was unfortunate that she suffered so while you also were suffering, but as it did happen so,

as there is no proof of this, why not let the matter drop? Why rake up an old story—a past folly? If the girl has disappeared—why seek her out? I have told you I will acknowledge you to be Earl of Llandudno, my elder brother. I am sufficiently rich; in fact, I have speculated in mining and railway shares, and have made a heap of money. I detest having to go into Parliament and showing myself in public. You shall take the family honours and title and go into Parliament, and you can marry and perhaps have another heir. But to seek out a girl, a poor, lost, ignorant girl, and acknowledge her to the world as your daughter seems to me terribly silly.

"You forget, my dear brother, that Mary Moore was the dream of my youth, and has been the memory and almost the hope, the now ruined hope, of my manhood. Through all the years of my most horrible captivity I have thought incessantly of her. When I managed a few months ago to make my escape I hastened at once to Galloway to seek her, and found only her grave. I did not make myself known there, but made inquiries and heard of the death of a girl, the death of my wife in the workhouse, and of the child having been brought up by some farmer named Darrell. I went to those people, and was told that my child some time before had entered into the service of Lady Emily Fairleigh, who had married Lord Athlone. I then came to London to seek out the Athlones. I had an interview with her ladyship herself, who told me that she had suspected Aileen of misconduct, and had turned her away, and that she did not know where she was, nor where to look for her. She said also that things and circumstances which had come to her knowledge since proved Aileen was pure and innocent. She wept greatly. I could see she was breaking her heart for the sake of an unworthy husband. But meanwhile all clue to Aileen seems lost since a woman called Thompson sent her trunk to a dirty street in the Hampden Road, in St. John's Wood. I went to the house and saw a horrible-looking woman, who informed me that the girl had gone away in a cab with her box three weeks ago. I have had a hunt among all the cabmen in the neighbourhood, but they all deny having taken a young lady from the house in question."

"I think you had much better let this matter drop," said the younger brother, drily. "If you find this poor girl she will be one that you will shrink from acknowledging; you must know that. And now tell me how you have lived and paid your expenses, my dear brother, since your return."

"The five hundred pounds which I had meant to have sent to my wife has all this time been accumulating; and I knew where to go and make myself known and claimed it. It is nearly doubled now."

"And you shall be acknowledged as Lord Llandudno, Tom," said the generous though eccentric elder brother; "but I cannot bear the idea of making that mad marriage known when the wife is dead and the child is lost."

Thomas, Earl of Llandudno, covered his face with his hands; then, recovering himself, said, slowly:

"I shall not rest night or day until I find Aileen."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," returned the elder brother.

"I shall advertise."

"And if you do," replied Charles, "a dozen girls, all adventuresses, will come and claim to be Aileen Moore."

"But I shall take them to Lady Athlone to be identified."

"You cannot storm her ladyship's house in that fashion."

"Anyhow, I am resolved to find her," replied the new earl.

A hundred plans occurred to him, but he hesitated which to adopt. He went home to the grand, gloomy town house in Grosvenor Square that night with his brother.

The news of the return of the Earl of Llandudno, long since supposed to be dead, soon spread. It also soon became known that his younger brother, full of whims and eccentricities, had at once received him with delight and affection, and had expressed his readiness to resign the title and responsibilities—to cease to be Earl of Llandudno and subside into Lord Charles Evesham, a rich, idle man, with nothing to do save to follow the dictates of his own fancy.

The new earl had not made himself known in the village of Clondell when he had gone there to institute inquiries, and when the news reached even that remote village that the nobleman who was supposed by all to have been the deliverer of poor Mary Moore had come back, after enduring untold horrors for years in Siberian mines, the people looked at one another and wondered whether the tall, dark stranger who had been so recently in the village asking questions about Mary Moore and Aileen could have been sent by the earl.

Meanwhile the Darrells, who were now doing a little better on their farm, marvelled among themselves as to what had become of the girl who had been to them as daughter and sister. They indeed wondered with a great pity, and with many throes of returning love. Cruel secrets, it is true, had reached them respecting Aileen, thanks to Miss Thompson, who had written a whole budget of untruths to Miss Godfrey.

Earl and Countess of Clondell were now travelling on the Continent, and Miss Godfrey was with them. The earl was in charge of some of the eldest servants, and it was given out that most likely none of the servants would visit Galloway again for some time to come since the lady had shown themselves to be so dangerous and rebellious during the visit which the lords of the soil had conducted in making to that out-of-the-way village.

Meanwhile the new Earl of Llandudno was secretly searching for Aileen Moore, or rather Lady Aileen Evesham, his legitimate daughter. To please his brother, the earl kept the fact of his early marriage and of the relationship, in which he stood to the lost Aileen, a secret for the present.

"If ever you do find her," said Lord Charles Evesham to the earl, "I am afraid that you will find her in some degrading position which will render it impossible that you should present her to the world as your daughter. True, Lady Athlone has now found such extra proof of her lord's falseness that she acquiesces in Aileen's guilt. He has secreted two girls since he trapped Aileen, both of whom have fallen victims to the splendid temptations that surround them. Both are to be seen every day in the park. Each drives her own superb horses, each reigns queen in her separate splendid villa. These things are town talk, and Lady Athlone, who is weak enough to love this worthless wretch, goes about heart-broken. Aileen is missing. Perhaps, driven desperate by want, feeling that she had lost her fair name, and that all the world were against her, she is in some country cottage or inn, leading a life of shame. She may have returned to Lord Athlone. Indeed, it strikes me as most natural that a girl driven desperate by circumstances as she was would very likely have fallen so."

"And if it were so, and I found it out," said the earl, "I fear I should be tempted to take his life."

"For heaven's sake do nothing of the kind," said the more prudent younger brother; "that would not restore the innocence or the happiness of the poor girl. You might call him to account in a more orthodox manner; but I believe that Athlone will meet with what he deserves sooner or later. He is a daring, cruel, and infamous scoundrel."

The earl and his brother did not advertise for Aileen. They fancied that Lord Athlone knew of her whereabouts, and at once started on that scent. They followed it up secretly, and at last they fancied that they had really discovered a clue which would lead to the finding of Aileen. That they were mistaken—well, who knows that poor Aileen lies ill in the hospital, are well

aware. But the false clue and the search led to a most strange and tragical result.

It was now the middle of May, and the season was at its height. It was the gayest season that London had known for five or six years. Reckless extravagance, an almost Royal magnificence was the fashion among the leaders of society. The weather was fine and sunny; the costumes of the ladies, the splendour of their equipages, the rich liveries of their servants, the beauty of their horses, all made pictures in the streets for those who had eyes for the artistic and the picturesque; and everywhere in the streets Lord Llandudno was continually searching for the lost Aileen.

"I am determined to find her," he said to his brother.

We have before stated that the conduct of Lord Athlone, so recently a bridegroom, was making food for scandal. His daring dissipation made women wonder and men smile or scowl, according to their idea of right or wrong. Mary was upstart draper's assistant, who considered that he was gifted with superb beauty and talents, which only needed a fine fortune to make them resplendent, wished with all his soul that it lay in his power to "play such pranks before high Heaven" as did Lord Athlone, while other men, honest, brave, and true, felt their cheek tingle with shame when they reflected that this shameless being was a man who claimed to be at the head of a section of the English aristocracy and to set the fashion to others.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A woman passed in the dark,
Her eyes were dimmed with tears,
Her wretched companion with her
Her heart is broken in the night.

The Earl of Llandudno was in a shop in New Bond Street, looking at some quaint silver boxes, cups, and other curiosities. After his rough life of privations and sorrows it was not natural he should have much taste for antique rarities. The truth was he had spoken to a detective, who told him that at a certain time in the morning a young lady might be seen who was, or was supposed to be, an entirely new flame of Lord Athlone's—a creature whom he had actually discovered going about with an organ in the streets.

Lord Llandudno had taken into his head the idea that this girl would turn out to be Aileen. He bought a silver cup, and then began examining some other trifling things. While he was thus engaged a carriage drove up to the door, and a slight, erect girl alighted. She was closely veiled, so that nothing could be seen of her face. She walked forward with the step of an empress, and said, in the sweetest, softest tone, to the shopman:

"Is the portrait I left to be set in the lock ready?"

"It is not yet ready, madame. It will not be, I think, till this time to-morrow."

The lady struck the counter impatiently with a fan she carried.

"It is always the way with you tradesmen," she said. "You make promises and do not keep them, and thus mislead people. You deserve neither shops nor customers. I will return to-morrow at about this time, and if the portrait is not ready I will give your shop a bad name. Yes, I will not rest till I have utterly ruined you."

Holding her head very high, the lady returned to her carriage, and was forthwith driven away. The earl's heart beat fast. He had not seen the face of the young, graceful, imperious creature, but instinct told him it was beautiful, and in his heart he actually believed that the girl was his long-lost child.

"Who is that lady?" he anxiously asked the shopman.

"She is what your lordship might suppose from the ill-bred insolence of her manner."

The man replied, with a half smile. "She is a girl supposed to be of mixed Spanish and Irish origin. Only one month ago she was in the streets with an old woman, supposed to be her

grandmother, who played a barrel organ, and while one played the other danced. One day a certain noble lord who has a fancy for girls of low origin, stopped his carriage, called her to him, talked to her, and finally, in the most barefaced way, she entered his carriage and was driven away up the Hampstead Road. She has brought her portrait to be set in a gold locket, and you perceive the rage she was in because it was not finished. We also have his likeness, which we are to set in a diamond cross."

"Will you let me see those portraits?" the earl asked.

"Certainly, sir."

In another moment the portraits were in the earl's hands. Instantly he recognised the blonde, handsome face of Lord Athlone. The features of the girl he positively devoured with his anxious eyes. Was it possible that this was Aileen? A mixture of Spanish and Irish blood, so the shopman said; was supposed to run in the veins of this new favourite of Lord Athlone's. Certainly it was the most beautiful face he had ever seen. If it were true that this lovely girl had played a barrel organ in the street and wore rags, such a glorious type of beauty as hers was must have looked out from her sordid attire even as the moon looks out through a rift in the murky clouds. The earl had heard that his daughter Aileen was beautiful, and when he beheld the strange beauty of this young face his heart sank. There was not the faintest resemblance to his peasant love; but then he had been told in Galway that Aileen was not in the least like her mother. This, then, was Aileen, though how she could have joined the old woman who played the street organ, instead of at once seeking the reprobate Lord Athlone when she left the miserable lodgings to which the earl had traced her, remained still a mystery.

"Can you tell me where this girl lives, and under what name," asked the earl of the shopman.

"Yes; she is called Madame Carletti. The nobleman under whose patronage she lives is fond of giving fanciful names to his favourites. I don't know what her real name is."

"Can you give me her address?" said the earl, sorrowfully. "I have reason to be deeply and painfully interested in that young person, and I believe even that I have a right to demand that she shall leave the shameful mode of life she has adopted."

"I fear you will fail, sir. I happen to know some of the lady's servants, and I am sure that she loves the nobleman whose favourite she is to distraction. She is terribly jealous, and they say that if she really and truly believed Lord Athlone had other favourites she would commit murder."

Lord Llandudno did not pay much heed to this terrible surmise simply because it seemed so preposterous. He only thought the supposed Aileen would hesitate to leave her present abode because it was magnificent, and her manner of life luxurious and splendid.

"I will give her wealth," he said to himself.

"I will settle a small fortune upon her on condition of her leaving that man. But though it is my duty to protect and provide for Mary's child, I cannot acknowledge her as the Lady Aileen now that she has fallen so low. It would not be fair to the ancient and unsullied name I bear."

Then he turned again to the shopman and asked him for the young lady's address.

"You will not betray me?" the man said, anxiously.

"Trust me," the earl answered, gravely.

Soon the address was handed to him. He was quite surprised to find that it was in the heart of Sussex, at least thirty-five miles from town, in a picturesque but very remote village. He had fancied that this Madame Carletti, with her eager love of pleasure, would have been established in some elegant boudoir residence within easy access of the theatres. However, he said nothing, and when he was walking away with the address in his pocket it struck him that Aileen, accustomed from infancy to a country life, had probably pined like a caged bird in town, and so had petitioned Lord Athlone to

allow her to dwell amid the sylvan beauties of Sussex.

Thus it fell out that the Earl of Llandudno was the instrument chosen by an avenging Providence to bring down punishment on the head of Lord Richard Athlone, one of the most worthless and cruel of miscreants. Little dreamed this Sybarite noble of the terrible vengeance that was looming in the near future. Of late his neglect of his beautiful wife had been open and pointed, and seeing how passionately she loved him he took a diabolical pleasure in adding insult to injury.

Lady Athlone was now confined to her room, seriously and dangerously ill. Her hopes of an heir, who would perhaps touch the cold, hard heart of Lord Athlone, were crushed for the present. Doctors and nurses were in attendance, and everybody trod softly in the Belgrave Square mansion—everybody save the sufferer's lord and master, Richard Athlone. His lordship made as much noise as he could, what with his dogs, his billiard balls, and his drinking songs. When remonstrated with by Doctor Daly, an eminent physician, he laughed harshly, and said:

"My dear sir, I shall do as I choose, and make as much noise as I like," and he went into his room, banging the door and laughing loudly.

"That man is a ruffian or a madman," said the doctor to himself.

Lord Athlone had found out that it was his little page who had betrayed him to Miss Thompson for the consideration of five pounds. His vengeance on the poor child had been worthy of a Nero. He had sent him purposely to a distant farm in the country with a made-up message, and he had previously sent to the said farm two of the most savage dogs to be trained for hunting, and he gave orders that they were to be allowed to roam about at will, especially on a certain day when he himself intended to be there.

Instead of going he sent the boy, and the event fell out as he had wished. The savage brutes set upon the poor little fellow and tore his flesh from his arms and legs. When he was rescued he was half dead. The injuries to his tendons would, the doctors said, make him lame for life. While the child lay at the hospital, suffering untold tortures, this nobleman went to his sick bed and asked him in a whisper, and with a diabolical smile—

"Has the five pounds Miss Thompson gave you done you any good?"

The wretched lad knew then that his fiendish master had prepared this terrible vengeance for him; but Lord Athlone was so crafty that he quite put it out of the power of anybody to prove this wickedness against him. And meanwhile a great and terrible punishment was preparing for him.

The address of the beautiful young lady whom the Earl of Llandudno believed to be his own daughter ran thus:

MADAME CARLETTI,

Heatherwood House,

Rosefield,

Sussex.

Rosefield was a small, picturesque village. There were a few ancient houses, a bright trout stream, over which was an ivy-clothed bridge, a Gothic church and a parsonage. A circle of wooded hills shut in the sylvan lanes and farmsteads on the right side, and an expanse of purple swelling downs on the left side.

As for Heatherwood, it was a beautiful old house sequestered in its own gardens and thickets. It had been the family seat of the Heatherwoods for years, but the old family had descended through a series of misfortunes to a state of genteel poverty, which entailed the necessity of a strict economy, so they let the house, farm and grounds to Lord Athlone, who placed therein his newest favourite, Celeste Walbrook, a girl with a mixture of Creole and Spanish and Irish blood in her veins, who was so jealous that she actually refused to accept the luxuries which he showered on her unless

she were quite assured that she alone reigned in his heart.

Celeste lived as the shopman had stated under the name of Madame Carletti. She liked pictures and statues and old china and antique furniture, not because it is the fashion to like such things, but because she had a nature at once warm, sensuous and artistic.

She was gifted with a passionate heart, a glorious beauty, and a natural love of ease and splendour. Hers was something of an Eastern temperament. She could read fluently, but in that one accomplishment all her acquisitions began and ended. She could not write or spell, and all she read was a series of the most highly coloured romances. She was not sufficiently educated or refined to desire that the fiction she read should represent the idealised realities of life and should be true to nature.

It was a warm balmy evening at the end of May. Celeste had dined luxuriously. She was fastidious in regard to cookery and wines, pastry and fruits, and she dined luxuriously. She was alone. She was expecting the arrival of Lord Athlone.

The carriage had been sent to the station to meet him. In about an hour he would surely arrive. Warm as was the evening, a wood fire, fragrant as the incense offered to some Eastern idol, burnt in the low grate. One large lamp of exquisite design was placed upon an inlaid table in a recess of the elegant though antique drawing-room, and the soft, subdued radiance lent a sort of enchantment to the scene.

The three long French windows were opened upon a flowered lawn. The May moon was rising over the woods to the left. There was a door at the further end of the drawing-room which opened into an exquisite fernery, where a marble fountain was playing. A statue of Flora in white marble held a lamp in her hand which shed a delightful lustre on the ferns and some rare white flowers.

The room was long and rather narrow; the chairs and couches were mostly upholstered in the rich though faded embroidery of the ladies of the last generation of that poor noble family who were the true owners of Heatherwood. And Celeste walked up and down waiting for the man to whom she had given the mad love of her undisciplined heart.

She was fantastically dressed in a long trailing robe of pure white muslin cut low in the bodice; her round, white, smooth arms were bare and encircled with heavy plain golden bracelets; her dark hair curled low on her brow, but it hung in rich masses behind far below her slender waist; round her waist was bound a rich crimson satin sash, and a scarf of the same was passed over her shoulder; round her throat glittered a necklace of large diamonds.

The walls of the drawing-room here and there contained portraits painted in panel of the ladies of the Heatherwood family. If those smiling beauties had been conscious, what would they have thought of one like Celeste desecrating the beautiful old room with the presence of her frail loveliness?

All at once she started, for she heard the crunch of the gravel in the drive under a wheel, and she believed that Lord Athlone had arrived. She ran to the open window and waved her white arms in welcome. Then she ran out into the wide old hall, and as the door stood open on that warm night she went out under the porch and she cried:

"Come in, my love, come in!"

And there stepped out of the carriage a tall, stately man of middle age—not Lord Athlone. He took off his hat, bowed courteously, and said in dulcet tones:

"Am I addressing Madame Carletti?"

Celeste's heart sank.

"I am Madame Carletti. But, oh! tell me the truth! Athlone—is he ill, hurt—not dead—don't tell me he is dead!"

"He is well, alive. Calm yourself, madame."

"Then what is it? Tell me; he has sent me a message; you bring me news of him?"

"Yes, I bring you news of him," said the stranger.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

A LEMON-SQUEEZER.

A GENTLEMAN residing in a suburban town, but well-known in business circles in the city, finding that his otherwise well-ordered household was without that indispensable article of modern civilisation known as a lemon-squeezer, and having tried for several days, in vain, to think to bring one out with him from town, finally directed his man to remind him of it the following morning before his departure for the city. Standing on the door-step, after breakfast, the next day, and just as he was about to bid his wife his usual affectionate farewell, he heard, in stentorian tones from the region of the barn, the words "Squeezer, sir!" Perhaps it was well for the faithful domestic that his employer had just time enough to catch the train, but it is needless to add that there is now a lemon-squeezer of the latest pattern in the house.

DIDN'T CUT IT OFF.

Nobody expects that a draper's assistant can keep his mind on every little detail of the business day in and day out without a break. That they can't do it was recently witnessed in a shop, when a woman inquired for bedticking.

"Certainly; three different grades," replied the assistant, as he pulled down the stuff.

She gave each grade a long and close inspection and finally said:

"Does this tan-colour wear well?"

"Eh? wear well?" repeated the assistant, his eyes on a customer at the other end of the shop. "Yee, we warrant this piece; and you see for yourself it is a perfect match for your complexion. How much shall I cut?"

That assistant may never know why that customer rose with a bound and walked out, but if she ever meets him at a church festival, she'll do her best to make it dreary for him.

IMPERTINENT REMARKS.

SOMETIMES the man who takes the liberty of commenting on the looks or habits of others receives the punishment he merits. A story is told of the travelling Englishman who was regularly set upon for venturing on an impertinence of this kind. It was at a table d'hôte at Boulogne. The Englishman in question, a very bumptious individual, was accompanied by a lady, and sitting opposite to them was a young German, on whose fingers were a number of massive rings. After gazing in a most persistent manner at him, the Englishman, addressing his companion in a loud tone, said, "I hate to see a man with rings on his fingers!" The German replied to this with a supercilious sort of sneer, so the Englishman "went for" him again, and said, in a still louder tone, "Do you know what I would do with a ring if I had one?" Before the lady could reply, and to the great amusement of all who heard it, the German broke in, "Vare it in your nose!"

AN ORIENTAL HUSBAND.

THE man that a Turkish princess chooses for her husband is not to be envied. In the first place, he has very little time to anticipate his happiness. He learns at one and the same moment that he is loved and that he is to marry, and so is supposed to hold himself ready to become a husband at a moment's notice. The princess herself consults nobody but the Sultana Valide, or the mother of the sultan. The latter, in her turn, discusses the matter with her son, and the messenger is forthwith sent to the fortunate wretch. The bridegroom is at once loaded with court favours, and is sure to receive civil or military promotion—more

often the latter. But if he offends his wife he is disgraced as quickly as he was exalted, for jealousy in a member of the imperial family is armed at all points for vengeance.

The married lady, being of the race of Othman, claims the most profound respect of her lord. His life is a veritable slavery; his relations with his wife is regulated by the most scrupulous etiquette. He must never quit his part of the house without her special permission; he must never enter the harem without her formal summons. He must maintain before her an attitude of unfailing respect, which indicates his inferior situation. He is, in fact, nothing more than a slave. On the whole, all Turkish husbands are to be commiserated. The women are naturally intelligent, but they are almost absolutely ignorant and of an extraordinary laxity of morals.

Dress is the one thing they think about, especially now that they have taken to Parisian styles. This change was brought about by the war of the Crimea. You will find in the harems the latest fashions of the French capital in boots, dresses, gloves, and the rest. The children are even more to be pitied than the men. They are the first victims of their mother's depravity. From their tenderest age they are brought up among little female slaves of their own years, who are ordered to obey them in everything, and they thus get their first lesson in tyranny in very good time. We are never to forget that the woman slave who rules the Turkish harem also rules the Turkish Empire. "Man is the head," but woman is the neck which controls its movements.

A SURPRISE.

Come here, love, and sit down beside me.

I've a story of interest to tell;
If I'm cruel, oh, pray do not chide me.

You know how I loved you so well.

You remember the first time we met, love,

'Twas a day of both sunshine and rain;
That glance I can never forget, love,
It caused me such wild, pleasing pain.

You remember how, on the next evening,

We again by chance (?) happened to meet,

When the same piercing glance sent a-heaving

My heart, which did rapidly beat.

You remember you gave me permission

To call upon you at your home,
And the next we went out a-fishing
In a boat by ourselves all alone.

You remember our gay, joyous laughter,

As we hooked in the trout from the stream,
And the fun we had many months after—

It must now appear as a dream.

A dream that we both now must wake from,

To find that events have so ran,
That the "miten" you now have take from

Your George, who's a bold married man.

H. D.

IN THE BALL-ROOM.

THE on-looker at the dreamy waltz finds plenty of amusement in observing the different

methods practiced. One man waltzes with his head in the air and much the expression worn by a dog when he is howling at the sound of music. Another has a bend in the middle, which looks as uncomfortable as it is ungraceful. One genuflects at every turn, and slides out one of his feet as if to trip up rival dancers. An even more dangerous performer works his left hand up and down as if it were a pump handle. A tall man, with a top-heavy kind of stoop, leans over his partner like a great hen taking a chicken under her wings. One man holds his partner as if he were afraid she would slip from his grasp, while another looks as if he wished he were rid of his bargain. And still another looks sad and determined, as though his life depended upon the success of every evolution.

A QUESTION OF EDUCATION.

OUR English girls would probably view with contempt the acquirements of an Italian girl, so greatly do national views of education differ. The Italian bride makes her own outfit, and as the trousseau consists of six dozen of everything, being intended to last twenty-five years, and all must be embroidered and frilled, the task is not an easy one. But they take their time to do it, occupying two years, in getting it in shape, and all the while the work goes on the lovers are courting. The husband gives the dresses, shawls, everything, in fact, but the underclothing. Italian girls do not learn to sing and play the piano. These are left to people who earn their living by them. But these girls are taught how to sew, cook, and iron. In fact, they are educated, not for social ornaments, but to become good wives.

A FUTURE FEMININE DIARY.

MONDAY.—Just as I had settled my household work for the day, I was called away to serve on a jury, and had to remain in the law courts until the evening.

TUESDAY.—Some riots having taken place in our neighbourhood, was forced to act as special constable. Paraded the streets all day long in a state of constant alarm.

WEDNESDAY.—Received a letter from my friend Susie, who has heard that the militia are to be called out. Visited her, and discovered that the women, as citizens, are now liable to military service.

THURSDAY.—Had to attend an inquest as a coroner's jurymen. A very pleasant duty indeed, as it was held upon a man who had committed a most horrible suicide.

FRIDAY.—Having failed to obey the orders of a county-court judge, was locked up in prison for contempt. I owe this scrape to the extravagance of my husband—a man who will buy hats and coats, and will not work for our living.

SATURDAY.—In deep tribulation. The governor of the gaol is a female, and, as a matter of course, favours the male prisoners. Asked for a book and was furnished with a work upon Roman law. Cried myself to sleep over a passage which told me that no one could obtain the privileges of a citizen without accepting a citizen's duties and responsibilities. Oh, why did I give up the privileges of a real woman for the miseries of a mock man?

IT CURED HER.

A young lady, well known in the fashionable circles of Edinburgh, was accustomed to use her eye-glass in the street in a way that often bordered on impertinence. One day she received a stinging rebuke, which made her drop the impudent habit. While walking in the street with several other fashionable ladies she met a country clergyman, a man of eminence and keen

wit, but ungainly in appearance and rough in attire. Putting her glass to the eye she watched him very intently. The clergyman was quite equal to the emergency. Walking directly to her, he said:

"My dear Marie, how do you do? How are your worthy father and venerable mother—and when did you come to town?"

Overwhelmed with surprise, she said, with some alarm, "You are mistaken, sir!"

"What! is it possible," he replied, "that you do not know me?"

"Indeed, I do not, sir!"

"Neither do I you," said the minister.

"Good-morning, madame."

Making a ceremonious bow, he walked away, while her companions laughed at the bold girl for the rebuff she had received. Her eye-glass was never used again to quiz strangers.

THE OLD ROAN, ROVER.

The old horse rests 'neath the waving grass,

Where the cowslip and daisy kiss the clover,

And children, sweet as the flowers pass,

With a sigh the grave of the old roan, Rover.

For oft they will tell that years ago,

When mother was young and father blithe,

The old horse resting still and low

Was the one that carried the farmer's wife;

The jolly old roan in its youth and pride

No equal had through the country side.

The old horse rests in its quiet grave,

And the children weave garlands of sweet wild roses

As they speak of the noble deed, so brave;

He died near the spot where he now reposes.

When he carried their mother thro' field and flood,

While the angry waters were lashed in strife,

'Twas then the old roan first show'd his blood;

The horse that carried the farmer's wife,

The jolly old roan so stout and true,

Had courage and metal to pull them through.

Safe and sound to her friends away

He breasted the waves and bore her over,

And landed her there with a joyful neigh,

The horse that sleeps 'neath the scarlet clover;

And many a year was he kept with pride

To bear the youngsters, when fun was rife.

To holiday sports round the country side,

The horse that carried the farmer's wife.

Around the grave of the old roan, Rover,

Float memories sweet as the scented clover.

O. P.

A LANTERN-JAWED young man called at a country post-office recently and yelled out, "Anything for the Wattses?" The polite master replied, "No, there is not." "Anything for Jane Watts?" "Nothing." "Anything for Ace

Watts?" "No." "Anything for Tom Watts?" "No, nor Dick Watts, nor Jim Watts, nor Sweet Watts, nor any other Watts, dead, living, unborn, native, foreign, civilised or uncivilised, savage or barbarous, male or female, white or black, franchised or disfranchised, naturalised or otherwise. No, there is positively nothing for any of the Wattses, either individual, severally, jointly, now and for ever, one and inseparable." The boy looked at the postmaster in astonishment, and said, "Please look if there is anything for John Thomas Watts?"

THE new Parliament is to meet on Tuesday, May 4th, and the electors will, according to the best calculations, be complete somewhere about the 15th or 16th instant.

A CASE came on the other day in a court of law just when Mr. A. was occupied in another Court. Not knowing exactly what to do, he hastily gave the papers to a friend, B., who rushed into Court just as the case came on, and at once plunged into the matter, committing, however, this unfortunate blunder—instead of defending the person as Mr. A. was engaged to do he imagined that he had to conduct the prosecution, and so set to work to prove in the most conclusive manner that the person whom he was engaged to declare innocent was unmistakably guilty. The real counsel for the prosecution was astounded, as well he might be.

LOST THROUGH GOLD;

OR,

A BEAUTIFUL SINNER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BITTER POE.

For love is strong as death,
And jealousy as cruel as the grave.

DOROTHEA was destined to have yet another visitor that first evening of her stay at the "Royal James." Marmaduke Hardy had not been gone a quarter of an hour when a card was brought to her inscribed George Arnold. Quick as thought there came to her the remembrance of the night at The Grange, when Duke read to her and Alice the history of the Aston mystery, and she knew that her visitor must be the man the poor earl had made his children's guardian. A moment later and he came in—a tall soldierly man in the prime of life, with a handsome face and eyes full of deep feeling. Dora wondered whether he had come as friend or foe; to help prove Alice's innocence or to assert her guilt.

"Pardon me this intrusion," he began, in a deep, musical tone. "You are Mrs. Hardy of The Grange, Keston?"

Dorothea confessed the fact. "I know all you have done for Miss Tracy," said Arnold, warmly; "your generous efforts for her sake. I felt I must come here to-night if only to express my gratitude."

A light dawned on Mrs. Hardy: this tall soldier must be the "someone" Alice had loved. She pressed his offered hand, but tears swam in her clear eyes as she raised them to his face.

"Oh, Mr. Arnold, I love her. I would do anything for her, but I have failed. They have taken her to Halsted Prison, and she will be brought before the bailie to-morrow."

"I know it," he answered, sadly. "When the first arrest of Miss Tracy was announced I hurried back from London to find it was a mistake, and you had generously sacrificed yourself for her. 'I know now your sacrifice was in vain, and I come to you as her true friend to ask your counsel for the future.'"

"Lady Aston is hard upon her," remembering the savage expression of the beautiful face she had seen for one brief hour.

"Lady Aston will do Alice any injury in her power; she hates her with a deadly hatred."

"It is so strange; Alice is so young and innocent. How can anyone believe such a charge against her?"

George Arnold knew the world far better than Dorothea.

"The circumstantial evidence is very strong. We who believe Alice innocent cannot deny that. I cannot blind myself to the fact that my darling is in fearful peril."

"You love her?" questioningly.

"I love her as I believe no woman was loved before with the intense earnest affection of early manhood. I love her thus, and I know within myself she must be innocent, but I cannot prove it; I cannot contradict one of the terrible facts which together form such a weighty chain of evidence."

"I think," said Dorothea, with a wistful smile, "we need not quite despair. Mr. Hardy has engaged a clever young barrister—I don't know your Scottish term for it—from Edinburgh, and he will stay and help himself. He is very clever; if skill can do anything Alice will be free."

"You have thought of everything," said George, gratefully. "I have heard often of Mr. Hardy, the celebrated counsel, but I had understood you were a widow."

Dora blushed hotly.

"I am a widow, Mr. Arnold. Mr. Hardy is my husband's nearest relation, and he has looked after my affairs since I have been left alone."

"The first examination is to-morrow. I dread it."

"I shall be so thankful when it is over," cried Dorothea, impulsively. "We shall at least know the worst."

George shuddered.

"Think of what the worst will be, Mrs. Hardy. I would endure any suspense rather than that awful certainty."

"She is so young and beautiful; they would never believe she did it. No jury in the world could look at Alice and believe she would kill a poor old man who had been kind to her."

"But think of the countess. She is nearly as young as Alice; she is as beautiful, and is possessed of a hundred fascinations."

"Why does she hate Alice?" inquired Dora, simply. "One would have thought with a kind husband and every luxury wealth could purchase, she might have left an offenceless girl alone."

George Arnold knew Alice's chief crime in Sybil's eyes was that he loved her. He could hardly say this to Mrs. Hardy. For a moment he stood in embarrassed silence, then he remembered that even before he came to Trent Park Alice had been no favourite with the countess.

"I think," he answered at last, gravely, "Miss Tracy's whole life was a reproach to Lady Aston. To a certain part their history was identical; both had early been left fatherless; both had no fortune, save a beautiful face. Lady Aston sold her beauty for a title, and she hated Alice because she had not stooped to such a crime."

"To such a crime! You speak harshly, Mr. Arnold."

"I feel harshly. I have known Lady Aston ever since she could talk. We are distant cousins. I have known her a pretty child, a fascinating girl, and I know she sold herself to Lord Aston because he was rich and could offer her a coronet. My real knowledge ends there; I can conjecture the rest. When she lost her self-respect all that was good and womanly died within her; she became in very truth a 'Beautiful Sinner Lost through Gold.'"

"But if she did not love Lord Aston, why is she so eager to avenge his death?"

"I cannot tell you. I can only pray she may not avenge it on the girl we both hold so dear."

"Mr. Arnold, have you a shadow of suspicion who really caused the earl's death?"

"I can form no idea. One or two people have tried to raise the idea of suicide, but I cannot believe it; the lingering death is against it; besides, Lord Aston was such a cheerful, kindly old man, the idea is unnatural. He had two children he idolised, and a beautiful young wife. If any man had cause to wish for life, I should say he had."

"I shall be glad when to-morrow is over," breathed Dorothea; "I dread it so."

"You surely do not mean to be present at the examination, Mrs. Hardy?"

"I must. I could not wait to hear from others how things are going. I shall be there to hear for myself, and form my own opinion; it begins at ten o'clock."

"Will you allow me to escort you?"

Dorothea had hoped this proposal would come from another, but as it had not, and she could think of no suitable excuse for refusing, she assented. George soon after took his leave after repeated thanks and a warm pressure of Dora's small white hand.

"How he loves her," thought the little widow, as she crouched down on a footstool over Mrs. Malcolm's bright fire. "She is in prison; her life itself may be in danger, and yet I think I would change places with her just to be loved like that. I shall never be happy like she is, in spite of her troubles. I shall never love anyone as she does that tall, broad-shouldered Mr. Arnold. Well, I suppose I ought to be contented; I have had some love in my life. Poor Raymond gave me his whole heart, and James Carden professed entire devotion."

And then with a little laugh which had no real merriment in it, Dorothea sought her pillow, to dream that she and Alice Tracy were both being married at Keston Church, and she could not see the face of the man she was swearing to love, honour and obey.

She was up betimes the next morning. She breakfasted early and arrayed herself in her long seal skin jacket and hat long before there was any occasion to think of starting. She had an unread letter from Mrs. Stone in her pocket, and she took it out mechanically. It was barely a month since Auntie had gone to live with the seven grandchildren near Brussels, and how many new interests had crowded into Dora's life!

"You are indefatigable," said a well-known voice. "I quite expected you would be knocked up after your long journey."

She turned round and offered her hand to Duke. He held it a moment longer than was necessary, and thought how thin and transparent it was.

"I'm quite ready," said Mrs. Hardy, quickly, "but it isn't time to start yet."

"Don't talk as though you were going to the theatre," said Duke, irritably. "If you had seen as much of law courts as I have, you wouldn't make them a subject for mirth."

Poor Dora; she was far nearer tears than mirth, but she was a great deal too proud to say so. She stood tapping her fingers on the table idly until a step came to the door, and in obedience to her "Come in," Mr. Arnold entered. Dorothea received him almost as an old friend, and then she made the gentlemen known to each other.

Duke accepted the introduction with stiff civility, George with warm cordiality. There was a frown on the barrister's brow, but the master of Trent Park was only delighted to meet anyone who directly or indirectly had been kind to Alice Tracy.

He never noticed Marmaduke's chill manner, and Dorothea, consoled by seeing he was unconscious of the scant welcome bestowed on him, declared it was time to start. They all walked to the court in solemn silence. George Arnold felt too deeply for speech. Duke was offended that Mrs. Hardy should be so intimate with a stranger. Dora herself wanted very much to say something to show him she did not care whether he smiled or frowned, but could not think of anything bitter enough.

Mr. Arnold and Mrs. Hardy found two seats where they could see and hear all that went on; then Duke strolled off to meet the counsel for the defence, and the doors being thrown open the public entered in crowds.

Many people had come from Aberdeen, many more from Halsted and the villages around. Everyone who had known the earl and his family gathered now to see the fair girl who had lived in his home accused of taking his life.

Mademoiselle Gruet was absent, much as she longed to see "dat so poor Miss Alice." She had judged truly that her proper place was at the Manor. The Countess Adela and Little True must not be left to servants' care on this sad December day; for the rest good Dr. Brown had promised to bring her all particulars.

Mademoiselle was beginning to think Englishmen not half so brusque and cold as she had fancied; Dr. Brown was so very kind. Neither she nor her little charges were ill and yet he came to see them every day, and never seemed in a hurry to get away.

Perhaps of all the people in the Court three enjoyed the most attention: Sybil, Dowager Countess of Aston, George Arnold of Trent Park, and Mrs. Hardy.

The countess, in her sweeping erape-trimmed robes, looked the incarnation of wifely grief. Many eyes turned to her with admiration for her beauty and kindly sympathy for the sorrow which had thus early left her a widow; pity was given to her, not to Alice. According to public opinion her husband had wronged her—her name was not even mentioned in his will; he had set another in her place as mistress of the Manor and guardian of his children, and, as though to avenge the slight cast on his beautiful wife, that "other" had cruelly and deliberately done him to death that she might enjoy the honours sooner.

With such views as these, no wonder the good people of Halsted looked on Lady Aston as a victim. No wonder pitying eyes were raised to that pale, beautiful face, and murmurs of sympathy rang through the assembly as she passed to her seat.

But, in their way, Mr. Arnold and Mrs. Hardy enjoyed quite as much of the public interest, only in a different manner. It was known far and wide that Dorothea had let herself be arrested in Alice's stead for sheer love of the prisoner; it was known that she had clung to her in her troubles as a sister; that for her sake she had left home and friends and country. People admired her pluck, one or two thought the English lady beautiful as she sat there with the autumn sunlight playing on her head; they never linked her with the prisoner; to them it seemed an additional crime against Alice that she should have deceived anyone so young and fragile-looking as Mrs. Hardy.

"Poor young creature," said a woman in the crowd, standing up to get a better view of Dorothea, "she don't look as if she were long for this world. Perhaps Miss Tracy's been adoring her too."

Neither George nor Dora heard this peculiar suggestion, but it reached Marmaduke's sharp ears, and he would very much have liked to box those of the incautious speaker.

"That's Mr. Arnold," cried another voice. "Well, it is a shame, he's just the only person the poor little countess and her sister have to look to, and there he is with Mrs. Hardy; he's all for the prisoner, then, and he didn't even speak to my lady when she passed him, and it might melt a heart of stone to see her look so pale and beautiful in her weeds."

Then a hush fell on the whole gathering: the bailie, attended by his clerk and many other legal functionaries, entered. Mr. Guy and the counsel for the prosecution took their places; there was a buzz of expectation, and the prisoner was led in.

Very, very pale looked the fair girl whose life was in such peril; many there remembered her a little child, as innocent as their own children at home. Many had received little kindnesses at her hands, and yet such is the fickleness of public opinion, the whole court was against Alice,

from the bailie himself down to the poorest person there; the general sympathy was for the widowed countess.

Dora raised her clear eyes and gave the prisoner one look full of trust and love. George Arnold shaded his face with his hands, it seemed he could not bear to see the woman he had hoped to call his wife standing in the felon's dock. Alice saw him, and the sight sent the colour to her cheeks, a minute later and she was perfectly calm.

It seemed to Dora nothing could have been so tedious as the Scottish law court; even she soon saw there was no hope of an acquittal. The very tone of the bailie's voice as he spoke told what his views were: the prisoner would assuredly be sent for trial.

The principal witness was Lady Aston, with her veil turned back and her lovely face exposed to the admiring glances of the crowd. She told the history with which the reader is familiar. Once or twice she applied her handkerchief to her eyes, but no tears really marred their brilliancy, and her clear voice never faltered.

Of all her evidence two facts alone would have condemned Alice; they were so clear and were told in such a calm, collected manner: the arrowroot with the bitter taste which she was sent alone into the dining-room to sweeten, and the finding the remains of arsenic in her room. To this poor Dr. Brown was obliged to testify also. Never had there been a more unwilling witness, he gave the shortest and most uninteresting answers, and his kindly face wandered more than once to the prisoner's as though asking her pardon for even seeming to condemn her.

He and Lady Aston were the chief witnesses; Mrs. Ward and other of the servants from the Manor were called to prove the fact that Miss Tracy was constantly with the earl and had every opportunity of tampering with his food; her sudden flight the very day of his death, the fact that no one in the household—so it was alleged—knew of her intention, all these were brought forward with overwhelming force. George Arnold shivered.

"What must it take to convict the guilty?" he whispered to Mrs. Hardy, "when they bring such a mass of evidence against the innocent."

"I begin to despair," whispered the widow. "Oh, Mr. Arnold, how will she bear it?"

George Arnold thought of a summer's day when he had seen Alice Tracy in bitter sorrow, and he felt that whatever trial came to her she would bear it nobly, and something of this he said.

As Lady Aston swept past him, on her way back to her seat, for one instant their eyes met: hers were full of fierce, mocking defiance; his of a great sorrow. He felt at that moment that his cousin Sybil would stop at nothing, hesitate at nothing which should ensure her rival's ruin. Bitter and implacable would be the revenge of the woman who had loved him on the woman he had loved. He thought sadly of a verse in the Proverbs, and admitted the great King of Israel was right—"For love is strong as death, and jealousy is cruel as the grave."

They did not have to wait very long, the Court had adjourned for luncheon at one, and on their return there was little more evidence to hear. Very soon Bailie Macdonald announced that the prisoner was committed to take her trial at the next assizes.

A glance exchanged between Duke Hardy and Mr. Guy and the latter was on his feet. In terse and well-chosen language he pointed out that in less than a week the assizes commenced. Seven days—two of which were national holidays—were quite insufficient time to prepare the defence; in his client's interests he must request an adjournment.

The bailie looked very much as though he thought no adjournment could make any difference to Miss Tracy's fate: he answered that the law directed a prisoner to be tried at the assizes next after his committal, and that failing this, Miss Tracy must linger six weary months in prison.

Mr. Guy once more looked at his English friend, and, doubtless, received a sign he under-

stood, for he went on to inform the bailie that he petitioned for the trial to be removed by special writ to Edinburgh and tried at the High Court there in the spring assizes in March.

"It is two months' reprieve," said George Arnold, hopefully, to Dora when he had piloted her carefully through the crowd and they stood in the open air.

But Dora was in tears.

"Next Tuesday is Christmas Day," she said pitifully, "and Alice will have to spend it in prison."

CHAPTER XXXII.

LOVE'S REFUSAL.

Many voices cannot quench love.

Just a few days later, Christmas Eve, the day which brings joy to so many thousands of human creatures, the snow fell thickly. The sky had a dull, gray, leaden colour. The whole atmosphere was heavy, but not so heavy as the heart of Dorothea Hardy as she stood at the gate of Halsea Prison waiting for admittance.

There was no difficulty in her seeing the prisoner. Until after the trial Alice Tracy was free to see whom she would. Time, a prison warden paced up and down outside the cell. Time, this screen of the law could interrupt an interview of excessive length, but for the rest there was no restriction.

Mr. Guy visited the prisoner daily. The young advocate had thrown himself heart and soul into the case. If legal efforts and legal skill could avail anything, Alice would yet be free.

Yes, lawyer came, friend came, and Duke Hardy, to whom both names might have applied, came too. But the one heart which perhaps in all the world loved her best came not. George Arnold, who trusted Alice with a perfect faith, who loved her with the intense passionate love which only comes with mature years, had tried to see her and failed.

Alice was firm. She refused to see the man she had first met in the happy spring time whom she had learnt to love while the summer sun awoke the flowers to life, for whose sake she would have sacrificed everything except her word—she refused to see him.

Surely fate was hard on these two. They loved each other with a love as nearly perfect as any earthly passion can be, and yet it seemed that obstacle after obstacle rose up to separate them. Never from the moment when they learnt the secret of their own hearts had they met with any hope of mutual happiness. First they were divided by Alice's pledged word because she had sworn to be another's wife, now the waves played their soft, sad requiem over Ralph Johnson, and yet they were divided still. Their love was powerless to stem the tide of circumstances which separated them.

Alice Tracy had little hope of proving her innocence, and she would not expose George to the agony of such a parting as the one in Trent Wood, therefore she refused to see him. Of all around her, only Dorothea knew the tie which bound her to George Arnold.

No one else of the three who were her staunchest friends suspected it. Mr. Guy never dreamed of it; he thought Mr. Arnold merely an elderly champion of his client. The events of the last six months had scattered the silver threads plentifully amid the soldier's dark hair.

The young advocate never guessed he was the lover of a young girl like Alice, and Marmaduke Hardy had suspicions of his own which perfectly blinded him as to the truth. In the days which passed between the first examination and the snowy Christmas Eve we tell of, Dorothea and Mr. Arnold had been much together.

The prisoner's warmest friend and closest companion could not fail to be an object of interest to Mr. Arnold. He poured out his whole heart to her, and the woman who had never loved, who believed she should live her life through without loving, sympathised with her own true woman's sympathy.

These two were constantly together. Dorothea formed the one link between George and Alice all through those miserable days. They had really but one object, one thought: the hapless girl they both loved; but Marmaduke Hardy never guessed this. He felt a bitter pang that Dora should devote so much of her time and attention to a stranger. He never owned to himself that he cared for Dorothea. He would have denied it vehemently had such a thing been suggested to him, and probably asserted she was absolutely distasteful to him, so it must have been simple regard for his cousin's memory which made the sight of Dorothea on Mr. Arnold's arm such a painful spectacle to the barrister.

It was none the less so that he could find no fault with George Arnold personally. The latter was most grateful to him for his exertions in Miss Tracy's cause. As man to man most friendly to him, but yet our barrister disliked him. He would have hated any man who had prevailed on Dorothea to change the name of Hardy.

We left Dora at the prison gates waiting admission. The porter wished her a merry Christmas as she entered; the sound jarred on her ears. The man had meant kindly, but his greeting sounded a cruel mockery to Mrs. Hardy.

A moment more and she was with the prisoner. As arms round the slight figure she had grown to love so well. Alice Tracy in her plain black dress looked to the fall as beautiful as ever she had done at the Manor. Her large blue eyes were fixed on Dorothea with grateful affection, but she was calm and composed, while Mrs. Hardy, before she had uttered a word, burst into tears. It was strange that she wept, while the prisoner, who might (and, oh! such seemed very likely to be the case) have but a brief span left on earth, was perfectly calm.

"What is the matter?" asked Alice, in her clear, sweet voice. "Do not cry so, Dora. I cannot bear to see you and to think of all the trouble I have brought on you."

Dora cried on. She seemed thoroughly unhinged.

"Is anything wrong with Mrs. Stone?" mentioning the only name she knew likely to be affecting Dorothea. Her own troubles seemed so old that she never guessed her friend was weeping over them.

"It's Christmas Eve," said Dora, drying her eyes with an effort, "and you must spend your Christmas here. Oh, Alice, how can you take it so calmly; the very thought of it makes me utterly wretched."

"Is that all?" asked Alice, with the sweet smile which had first charmed George Arnold. "I thought something dreadful had just happened."

"It is so hard. I had so hoped everything would be settled by Christmas, and I could take you home with me to Keston."

"I wonder if I shall ever see The Grange again?" And in spite of her courage her voice quivered just a little. When one is young and strong it is so hard to face the possible prospect of death; doubly so when we love and are loved.

"Of course you will," decided Dora, quickly. "Not till after the trial perhaps, but nothing can prevent then."

Alice looked at her wistfully. Dora would not understand.

"Of course," she went on, quickly. "I know quite well you won't be my companion long. I know Mr. Arnold is longing to make you mistress of Trent Park, but you must come to The Grange first. I have a charming plan, Alice, for you to be married at Keston."

Alice laid one hand gently on her shoulder. "Don't you think it would be better, dear, if you could remember how little chance there is of my ever leaving Scotland?"

"Alice!" reproachfully.

"Think of the things they bring against me. Dora, if you had never seen me—if you had only read the case, as strangers will read it, in the newspapers—tell me, would you not think me guilty?"

"Not if I had seen Lady Aston. Alice, there is something so cruel in her face that even if I had never known you I must have distrusted her."

"It is not only her testimony, dear, they bring against me."

"It will all come right," with the blind faith some women have. "You are innocent and people must find it out in time."

"Others as innocent have suffered before me, Dora."

"Don't look on the dark side," pleaded her friend. "Alice, don't you want to be free?"

"Not want it!" and such a wistful look came into the blue eyes that Dora was fully answered. "Not want to be free! Only think, dear, of all that it means for me. Dora, if they take my life, they will blight George's too; he will never value it without me. We have given our hearts so wholly to each other that to live apart rolls life of all its pleasure."

"Alice," cried Mrs. Hardy, impetuously, "do all women love like that? Am I an icicle or a monster that my heart seems dumb? I am older than you, and yet in all my life I have never cared for any man as you care for George Arnold."

"You will care some day," answered Alice, softly. "You are too true a woman to live much longer without loving. Oh, Dora, may your love bring you less sorrow and more happiness than mine has brought me."

"Promise me one thing," urged Dorothea—"when you are acquitted you will let me take you home. You may be Scotch by birth, Alice, but Scotland has been very cruel to you; you must come to England with me."

"I wish I was English," cried the prisoner, bitterly. "Dora, all through those weary days I have been regretting that Lord Aston did not die in London."

"Why?"

"Have you forgotten what Mr. Hardy told us at Keston? Had only my trial been in England, when once it was over my fate would have been decided for all time."

"And now?"

"Don't you remember the third verdict in force over here, 'Not proven'? Oh, Dora, I can bear to die, but if the jury return a verdict of 'Not proven' I think it will be bitterer to me than death itself."

"But you will be free, dear—free as I am."

Alice shook her head.

"In law free, yes, but I shall be an outcast. Everyone but my friends will believe in their hearts I did it. Think how dreadful it will be for George. We shall be parted just the same, and, Dora, a living sorrow is so much harder to bear than a dead one."

"He would never believe anything against you. He would marry you just the same."

"And do you think I would let him. I could not. For our whole lives through we should have to be parted."

"Alice!" cried Dora, impulsively, "what do you really think killed Lord Aston?"

"Poison, I am sure; just as the doctors say."

Dorothea changed her ground.

"But who do you think gave him the poison? You lived at the Manor day after day; you saw the earl take his meals. He must have taken the poison with them. Now who do you think gave it him?"

Alice Tracy grew very pale. Suddenly there flashed upon her that strange communication of Lord Aston. Had it been the wandering fancy of an old man, or the simple truth? She could not resolve the matter, and Dorothea exclaimed: "Alice, you are silent. Do you know I believe it was Lady Aston? From the first I believe she did not love her husband. Mr. Arnold as good as admitted it to me, and I have been puzzling myself all this while as to why she was so eager to revenge him. I see it all now. Lady Aston killed her husband by a slow and painful death, and to turn away suspicion from herself she takes great pains to hunt down an innocent person as his murderer."

Alice Tracy was silent. Such had been her own thoughts.



[PARTNERS IN GRIEF.]

"You cannot deny it," cried Dora. "I am so glad I thought of it."

Mrs. Hardy spoke as though she believed she had only to go to Bailie Macdonald with this extraordinary statement and Alice would be released at once, and the countess shut up in her stead.

"You forget, dear," the prisoner said, simply, "you have no proof whatever of all this. It is simply the fancy of your own brain."

"I very seldom fancy things without a cause, Alice. I am so terribly matter of fact."

"But you cannot prove it," urged Alice.

"No. I have no idea how to set about it, but I will tell Duke Hardy. I daresay he will manage it for me."

"Dora, how very kind Mr. Hardy has been to me. Had I been an old friend of his he could not have done more."

"He likes intricate bits of law," was the concise reply.

"Don't be ungenerous, dear, it is so unlike you. You may not care for Mr. Hardy yourself, but you must confess no man in a thousand would have done so much for a perfect stranger."

"You were not a perfect stranger. You were my friend."

"But then, Dora, as you and Mr. Hardy hate each other, my being your friend wouldn't have given me any claim on him."

"He talks of going home soon," said Dorothea shortly.

"Going home? I suppose his clients can't spare him?"

"He says so. I don't believe that's the reason. The fact is, Alice, he's horribly cross. He has hardly spoken a civil word to me these three days."

"I thought you liked him so much better."

"I did when he first came. He was as kind to me as ever he could be. I hardly wanted to contradict him at all, and now I feel as if I must object to everything he says. In fact, we go at it like hammer and tongs."

"And he is going home soon?" wistfully.

"Dora, will he take you with him?"

"I shall not be taken, Alice. I am past the age of being controlled, and Duke Hardy has no power over me in any case."

"It is two months to the trial," said Alice, thoughtfully. "Are you really going to stay with me all that time, Dora?"

"I am going to stay with you until we know the worst."

"And then if it be as I think," replied Alice, earnestly, "we must part company. I shall have your love and care to look back upon as a bright spot in my sad life, and then I must hide my wretched story and go out into a world where I have no place."

"Alice, this is Christmas Eve. Do you know what I have come to ask you?"

Alice would not have been surprised if Mrs. Hardy had produced a Christmas pudding and begged her to stir it for fear she had no luck in the coming year, it would have been so like Dora. But her visitor had no parcel, no bag, so this idea must be wrong. She looked questioningly at her friend. She was quite grave now, only there was a dewy moisture about her grey-green eyes.

"I cannot think, dear," answered Alice at last. "You know I will do it if I can."

"I want you to let me bring Mr. Arnold here to-morrow."

Alice buried her face in her hands.

"Not that, Dora; not that. Oh, anything but that!"

"He longs to see you so, Alice. I think he would be comforted if only he could hear you speak to him again."

"It would cost him too much pain," answered Alice, firmly. "It might ease his grief for the moment, but it would give him a sorrowful memory to carry about with him for always. Give my dear love to him, Dora, tell him I shall love him until I die; but I will never see him until I am free."

The bitter pathos with which she added the last three words told Dora that she believed that

time would never come; but Mrs. Hardy had promised George to try her best. She spoke again.

"Alice, he longs so to see you. He says it would give him new strength to bear whatever comes."

"He must not see me," returned Alice, earnestly. "It would be too hard for him. Dora, he has never spoken to me since the day when he believed I should very soon be another man's wife. Oh," with a bitter sigh, "I can never forget that last meeting. My betrothed husband was expected to dinner, and Lady Aston invited George. They dressed me in bridal white. Everyone was late, and we two were in the drawing-room. We thought it was our last meeting before I was another's."

"Yes," cried Dora, with earnest sympathy.

"And did he come—the other?"

Alice shook her head.

"Lord Aston sent me away from the drawing-room, and then he made his wife come and tell me the truth. How that my lover had died on the homeward voyage, and I should never see him again. I think everyone expected I should faint. I never uttered a word. It seemed too wonderful to be true. I could not mourn that I was free, and yet my conscience smote me. He had loved and trusted me so. He died, they told me, with my name on his lips. I had never loved him—never given him a tender thought."

"And you never saw Mr. Arnold again?"

"Never once till the other day before the bailie. I think he knew that my heart was full of remorse for the dead man's sake who had loved me so, and that was why he went abroad. He was coming back to claim me when he heard this."

They were interrupted there. The warder entered to say the time had expired, Dorothea must go. There was a warm embrace, many loving words, and then Dora left to break the news of Alice's refusal as best she could to George Arnold.

(To be Continued.)



[A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.]

VIOLA HARCOURT; OR, PLAYING WITH HEARTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"Evander," "Templing Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

WEARY OF BREATH.

Betrayed by one she loved the best,
She longed for her eternal rest,
Hoping her sin might be forgiven,
And she received at last in Heaven

Forty-eight hours after the event narrated in the last chapter Sandford Newton strolled into the Jockey Club, of which he was a member. It was a warm afternoon, and the salons of his ultra fashionable circle were nearly deserted, but he saw half-a-dozen gentlemen in the card-room.

Being fond of play, he entered to see what was going on, and was surprised to behold piles of gold and notes upon the table. The cards were dealt, and each one prepared to play the game.

One of the players was Herbert Conyers. His general appearance showed that he had been up all night, for his eyes were bloodshot, his face haggard, and he trembled with extreme nervousness, the result of want of sleep and excitement.

"This must be the last round, gentlemen," he exclaimed.

"Agreed," replied the others. The cards were played, and Herbert won. Sweeping the valuable stakes into his pockets with an air of unconcern, he rose, put on his hat and prepared to leave the room, when he was confronted by Sandford Newton.

"I want a word with you, old boy," he exclaimed. "Come out into the street, then. I'm stifling for a breath of fresh air," replied Herbert.

They left the club together and strolled towards the Place de la Concorde, a gentle breeze agreeably fanning the gambler's heated brow.

"How is your wife?" asked Sandford. "I don't know," replied Herbert. The fact is, I have not been home since the night before last. De Tarbes and I, with some other fellows, have been playing at the club night and day for forty hours. I must have won fifty thousand francs. I will give it to Libby to buy diamonds with. That is a present which ought to make any man's peace.

"It's my opinion," said Sandford, "that she will not accept it."

"Eh!" ejaculated Herbert, elevating his eyebrows. "The absurdity of the idea. Did you ever hear of a woman refusing diamonds?"

"The fact is, Conyers, I was with your wife when you were talking to Viola, and she heard every word of what you said."

Herbert's face became convulsed with rage, and he raised his hand as if he could have struck his companion.

"What?" he cried. "I always thought you were a mean hound, Sandford Newton. This is not the first dirty trick you have played me, but I did not think you would stoop so low as to help my wife play the eavesdropper."

"Hear me out," pleaded Sandford.

Herbert restrained his rising temper and listened to Newton's account of what had happened, and his anxiety culminated as he came to the conclusion. His wife had threatened to leave him; perhaps she had already gone.

He ought not to have said what he did. It was wrong to leave her alone. He was much to blame in every respect, and though he loved Viola beyond all created beings, he was too much of a gentleman to wish to treat any

woman badly, more especially the one who held the sacred position to him of wife.

Apologising to Sandford for his hasty and intemperate language, he begged him to accompany him to his hotel, which he willingly consented to do. They hailed a fiacre and were driven rapidly to the Place Vendome, where he was staying.

On inquiring at the office he was informed that Madame Conyers had not been seen in the hotel since the time she left in the carriage to drive in the park. Half distracted at this news, Herbert rushed upstairs and examined the apartments he occupied. The bed had not been slept in. Nothing had been removed, and all he saw was her maid, who came running up when she heard of his return.

Bursting into a torrent of tears she implored him to tell her where her poor dear mistress was gone, and when he declared he knew nothing of her movements, she bewailed her as one dead, saying that something must have happened to her, and that she should never see her again. Sending the woman downstairs, Herbert sat down the picture of despair, while Newton paced the room in deep thought.

"This is an awkward affair, Conyers," he said. "In the frame of mind she was when I left her, she might do anything dreadful!"

"Do you think she has committed suicide?" asked Herbert.

He was facing the difficulty boldly, and he touched upon a subject which was in both their minds.

"If you ask me my opinion candidly," replied Newton, "I answer in the affirmative. The poor thing was awfully cut up. I do not wish to alarm you needlessly, but I think she would destroy all traces of her identity and seek death."

"It is very distressing," Herbert exclaimed. "I could not help saying what I did to Viola, yet at the same time I had no intention of hurting my wife's feelings. This uncertainty must be ended. Let us go."

"Where?"

"To the Morgue," replied Herbert, in a sepulchral tone.

They departed in silence to that gloomy receptacle of the unknown dead, where the bodies of the unfortunates of Paris are exposed for a time in order that sorrowing friends may identify them.

The corpses were eleven in number, all extended on marble slabs, a white sheet covering all but the face, on which dripped a steady stream of water, while the clothes in which they were dressed when found were hung up on a peg hard by.

They walked in a melancholy way past six dead people, three men and three women. At the seventh Herbert Conyers stopped. It was a woman. One glance sufficed. It was not necessary to look any further. Pale and beautiful in death, Libby was stretched out in the ghastly loneliness of that awful place. Herbert had never loved Libby as he had loved Viola, but this awful discovery completely crushed him for the time, and turning on one side he leaned upon Newton's shoulder and burst into tears.

"Conyers," said Sandford, who was also much affected, "bear up; it won't do to give way."

He gently led him out of the Morgue and called the attendant, who informed them that the body had been picked up in the river Seine. Nothing was found upon it to lead to its identification, so it was brought there.

"But, sir," he added, "there is a letter addressed to some gentleman in English. I have it here. If you are a friend of the lady, perhaps you would like to read it."

He handed Sandford a sheet of note paper, on which was hurriedly scrawled in pencil three words, which Herbert read looking over his shoulder.

"If these lines should ever meet the eye of the one for whom they are intended, I want him to know that I love him even at the time I am about to destroy myself. I have deceived myself by believing that he loved me. The words he spoke to-day to another were overheard by me. I desire his happiness above all things, and I die in order that he may enjoy that other's love. If I cannot have his affection I will not begrudge it to her. Maybe she is more worthy of it than I. It is too late to discuss that question, though I have tried to be a good wife. My fortune I have already made over to him. Soon I shall plunge into the gliding river. My prayer now is that Heaven may forgive me for my wicked act; my last prayer will be that Bertie may find more happiness with Viola than he did with me. I do not wish to bring any disgrace on my husband, therefore I throw away everything which may lead to my identification. Oh, Heaven, my brain reels! I can write no more. Bertie, Bertie, how I have loved you!"

Great sobs broke from Herbert as he perused this affecting farewell letter.

"I was not worthy of her," he exclaimed, bitterly.

The keeper of the Morgue looked at him anxiously.

"Did you know her, sir?" he demanded.

"Knew her! She was my wife!" said Herbert, fiercely.

"Oh, indeed. The old story. Jealousy, I suppose, did it. We see a great deal of that here. Lots of gentlemen never seem to appreciate their wives until they've been and gone and done it, and the river gives up its dead. Where shall I send the body, sir?"

"I will see an undertaker."

"If you want the thing done privately, sir, I can recommend my brother, who is in the line. Funerals at the very lowest prices and no questions asked. Here is his card. I don't think you could do better under the circumstances."

Sandford took the card with a slight acknowledgment, and led his friend to the cab which was in waiting for them. Herbert obeyed him in a passive manner, for he was greatly shocked. Now that Libby was dead, he knew what he had lost. He went to his hotel, and to his credit,

be it said, Sandford behaved like a brother to him.

It was useless to try and keep the affair a secret. The body was brought to the hotel and buried from there. Everybody knew that Mrs. Conyers had committed suicide, and it was openly said that her husband's conduct had induced her to commit the rash act.

Fortunately for Viola, scandal did not mix her name up in the tragedy, and Sandford Newton never uttered one word which would throw any light on the mystery. People thought that Conyers was a gambler and perhaps a rascal, which had preyed on his wife's mind; but suicides are so common in Paris that it was only a nine days' wonder, being soon forgotten as some fresh scandal cropped up, and so the turf grew on the newly made grave in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, and Libby was at rest. So wags the world. To-day was Conyers's favorite; to-morrow we are forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SAND FORTINGTON DOES NOT DESIST.

The illness was not daily but their plans; which was the greater accident of the two. They had to wait.

Four some days after the funeral Herbert Conyers was prostrated. He remained entirely in the house, refusing to see anyone but Sandford, who began to show that he had some good points in his character, illustrating the trite saying that no man is wholly bad.

He became low and feverish, being confined to his bed, the doctor he called in advising rest and so other advice that was not of much use. What the public said, and what was the verdict of the outside world, he asked Sandford.

"My dear boy," replied Newton, "the women admire you. They say there must have been another woman in the case, and any attention to their sex flatters them in this country. The men congratulate you, as they bear your wife was rich."

"Have you seen her? You know who I mean," inquired Bertie.

"Miss Sutton, formerly Harcourt? I have. She instructed me to tell you that she sympathised with you, but—"

"But what?" asked Bertie, rousing himself from his languor.

"She added that she never wished to see you again."

"That is harsh."

"Virtue is always harsh," replied Sandford.

Conyers sank back on the bed again. His eyes closed as if in sleep, but he was in reality wondering if by any whirl of fortune's wheel Viola could ever be his. Over and over again he asked himself the question, and each time he was emphatically answered from his inner consciousness NO, with a big N and a capital O. Sandford flitted about like a gay butterfly from party to party, from club to club. All he wanted was gaiety and excitement. He got plenty of it, and was thoroughly contented to glide easily along on the skates of pleasure over the ice of circumstances.

He was at a house in the Quartier St. Germain one evening, where the host and hostess were legitimists of the old régime, and to his surprise he saw Lord Tarlington with his brother the Honourable Fitzharding Sutton. The lapse of time had altered Sandford Newton a great deal. He had a thick bushy moustache, and his whiskers had grown, so that Lord Tarlington and Mr. Sutton did not know him.

"Those two are up to no good. I'll watch them," he mentally exclaimed.

They retired to a corner of the room, which was crowded with people who were listening to a concert which was going on, and Sandford Newton followed them, standing near enough to hear what they said.

"Well, Fitz," exclaimed Lord Tarlington, "what have you done?"

"Everything that a man could do," replied Mr. Sutton. "La dama Blanca is dead, she died at Nice. Madame Menzies is in Paris in the Latin Quarter in a state of great poverty, telling fortunes to the bourgeoisie at a franc a head. I have engaged her to follow Viola and do what we agreed upon. Viola must be got rid of," continued his lordship. "She is unmarried and has made no will. If she dies her money reverts to me. I have spent nearly all I have, and immediate action is necessary."

"I know it," answered Mr. Sutton.

"Did Viola and Lady Clementina leave Paris to-day?"

"They depart to-night for Berne, in Switzerland. I have given Madame Menzies all instructions. She will trace them from Berne to the village of Draehentfels, where they intend to reside for a time, and she undertakes that Viola shall—"

The gentlemen and his brother moved on, so that Sandford was unable to catch any more of their conversation. He had heard enough to tell him that Lord Tarlington and his brother were again plotting against the property and the life of Viola, and that the infamous Madame Menzies was a second time the tool they had employed. He made an apology to his host and quickly left the house, hastening to the hotel where Lady Clementina and Viola had been living.

"Is Miss Sutton within?" he asked.

"No, monsieur," replied the servant. "She left to-night with her aunt for Switzerland."

Sandford pressed his hat upon his head and went away with the same rapidity which had characterized his former actions. This time he called upon Herbert Conyers, whom he found sitting up, looking much better, and eating some oysters which he washed down with chablis.

"Ha! dear boy," exclaimed Herbert, "You are late. I almost despaired of seeing you to-night."

"Pressing business has brought me," answered Sandford.

"What is that?"

"Lord Tarlington is plotting again. He and his brother have sent Madame Menzies to kill Viola, who has gone to Berne with Lady Clementina."

"How do you know this?"

"I heard it from their own lips."

He proceeded to explain how he had become possessed of the information and Herbert jumped from his chair.

"I am much better now," he cried, "and this must be prevented. Many thanks for telling me. I wonder what time the next train starts."

He rang the bell for the waiter to bring him a time table.

"Conyers," said Sandford, "I want to lend a hand in this. Of course I am not such a fool as to believe that Viola can ever be my wife, yet I cannot forget that I once hoped that blissful contingency might come about."

"Well!" replied Conyers.

"Let me come with you. In a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom. There's my hand."

Herbert Conyers took it in a cordial grasp.

"You shall come with pleasure," he exclaimed. "And I thank you for the offer. I admit that I think a great deal of Viola. She is ever out of my thoughts. You no longer look upon her as a rival."

"Good," said Sandford. "We will fight together if need be for the dear girl. At all events she shall not become the victim of that vampire, Madame Menzies. If we are quick we may do a great deal."

The servant brought the time table. There was a train going in the direction they wanted at twelve o'clock. That is to say in an hour's time. They agreed to pack their valises and meet at the station. Punctually at the hour appointed, Herbert Conyers, pale but resolute, met Sandford Newton at the booking-office.

"Tickets for two, first class to Berne, Switzerland," said Herbert.

The clerk shook his head.

"We cannot issue any more tickets to-night, sir," he replied.

"And why not?"

"Because we have just received a telegram that there has been a collision ten miles out of Paris and the line is blocked."

Sandford looked blankly at Herbert; but the latter drew his travelling cap over his brow and pointing to a seat in the waiting-room said:

"Never mind, we will wait. As soon as the line is clear let me know."

"Confusion," muttered Sandford, "that will give the madame a few hours start of us. Is it the mail train that is injured?"

"No, sir. Only a local passenger and a goods."

They retired to the salle d'attente, and lighting their cigars, waited impatiently for the announcement of the clearing of the line, which would permit of the resumption of the ordinary traffic. The life of Viola depended upon their speed and sagacity. Very slowly passed the time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A WICKED DEED.

When love speaks the voice of the gods
Make Heaven drowsy with the harmony;
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were tempered with love's sighs.

ADDED to a kind heart and an affectionate disposition, Viola had a singularly acute conscience which did not permit her to acquit herself of all blame in the untimely end of Libby. Poor broken-hearted, sensitive, loving Libby, who had found an early grave in the pitiless waters of the swiftly rushing river.

It was true that she had not sought the fatal meeting with Herbert Conyers in the park; that was the purest accident. She had not detested the burning words which had been poured into her not altogether unwilling ear, nor had she the slightest idea that those words were overheard by her rival at the time.

Yet she was the indirect cause of Libby's death, and the sad event preyed upon her mind. Her health began to suffer. Pale cheeks told the tale of sleepless nights, and red eyes spoke plainly enough of silent crying in private when no eye, save that of Heaven, could witness her grief.

Now that Libby was removed from earthly trouble, there was no legal impediment to her union with Bertie, and she knew that to marry her was the dearest wish of his heart, but she was resolutely determined never to build up her happiness on the ashes of another's despair, and to avoid any solicitation on his part, she resolved to remove from Paris without any delay.

The doctors who were called in to see her by Lady Clementina Sutton recommended a sojourn in the bracing air of Switzerland, and not caring whither she went, she easily allowed herself to be persuaded to go to the mountains. They stopped for a day or two in Berne before they started for a little village called Drachenfels, which was situated in a pleasant valley at the base of a huge mountain named the Alpenschloss.

The house of a guide, known as Fritz, was indicated as a pleasant place to stay at, and there they managed to stay. With plenty of exercise in the fresh air, regular hours and plain, wholesome food, Lady Clementina hoped that her niece would soon recover the rosy on her cheeks and that peace of mind which she had lost.

Of course, her secret was known to her ladyship, but with a feeling of delicacy infinitely to her credit she refrained from touching upon a subject which she was fully aware would cause pain.

Viola took a box of books with her to Herr Fritz's, in order that she might beguile the tedious of the evenings. There were only five houses in this smallest of villages—one was

Fritz's, another belonged to a chamois hunter, and the others were inhabited by simple farmers, on a small scale, who reared flocks of goats, whose milk made the curious-looking Gruyère cheese so much esteemed.

The snow and ice in the valley had all disappeared, but the summit and sides of the frowning Alpenschloss were capped and covered with a snowy mantle. It looked, indeed, like the monarch of mountains crowned in the long ago with its chaste diadem of snow, and Viola looked at its majestic peaks with a sort of awe, which the immense always inspires in a thoughtful mind.

Fritz did not do much just then, for the climbing season had not yet commenced. Sometimes his abode was crowded with travellers, who engaged his services as guide up the precipitous sides of the huge mountain, and there was not a better one in the whole Canton than this sturdy Switzer, whose horn had often sounded a *ranz des raches* on the great glacier or sea of ice half way up.

The house itself was one of those pretty ornamental chalets with curiously carved galleries running all round, looking for all the world like a pretty toy house. Inside it was comfortably but plainly furnished, without the remotest pretension to luxury.

Madame Fritz, the wife, and Pierre, the son, did all the work, while the husband was out shooting the nimble chamois for his skin, or away at Berne selling eggs and poultry. Some years ago the village had been much larger, boasting fifty or sixty houses, with a church, and having a population of nearly three hundred people.

One night a terrible calamity befell Drachenfels. When all were asleep a rushing noise was heard, and before anyone could escape an avalanche had fallen, burying the entire village. So people grew afraid of the big mountain, and would not remain under its shadow, only Fritz and a few others venturing to settle there.

On the evening of their arrival at the guide's they were sitting in the balcony while the tea was preparing. The sun was setting in golden splendour in the west, covering the mountain with fantastic wreaths of colour. Viola, with her hands crossed in her lap, was gazing at the scene and watching a herd of goats returning from pasture to be housed for the night.

"A penny for your thoughts, my dear," said Lady Clementina.

"They are scarcely worth it," answered Viola, heaving a deep sigh. "I was thinking, aunt, how charmingly peaceful life is here, and how nice it would be for one's existence to glide away like a dream in a spot like this. It is so different from the artificial life we live in cities. The works of the great Creator appeal more forcibly to the mind, and how suggestive of innocence and purity is the white, spotless snow. Oh, I should like to be buried in the snow when I die!"

Lady Clementina shivered.

"Don't, child, talk like that," she replied. "Are you not aware that there are such things as avalanches in these parts?"

"Just now I think I could almost welcome the chill embrace of an avalanche!"

"Viola!" exclaimed her ladyship, "you must really get rid of this settled melancholy. It is not right to indulge such fancies. Why do you not think more of the world and its joys?"

"The world has no joys for me."

"None?" cried Lady Clementina. "At your age, with your position and fortune, life ought to be very fascinating. Now there is Mr. Conyers, who—"

"Pray don't, aunt dear," Viola interrupted.

"I must talk to you. Hitherto I have refrained, but forbearance is no longer a virtue. You love that young man; in fact you have confessed as much to me. He loves you. Owing to an unfortunate mistake you were separated. Even then it was your own fault. Now every obstacle to your union is removed, since that poor thing was foolish enough to throw herself into the water. One word would make him fly to you. Speak that word and be happy."

"Never!" replied Viola, emphatically.

"Then give him an opportunity of saying it."

"That would be equally objectionable," said Viola, half closing her eyes. "He separated himself from me when he married Miss Brady. I will permit no man to play fast and loose with me in that manner. No, aunt, I have determined never to marry, for though I will not have Herbert, I think too much of him to let anyone else make me his wife."

"Is not that a foolish resolve? It seems to me to be cutting off one's nose to spite one's face."

"That is my affair."

"You will kill yourself if you go on in this way. I can see symptoms of your going into a decline already. Look at the hectic flush on your cheek. Is that healthy? If you were to die now all your fortune would go to Lord Tarrington, which would be a pity. That bad man is deservedly punished."

"Shall I make a will in your favour, aunt? Is that what you are aiming at?"

"No, no. I am not speaking from an interested motive. I am only calculating the chances of the future," Lady Clementina replied, hastily.

Viola again sighed deeply, as if ineffably weary of this conversation.

"Yes," she murmured, as if speaking to herself, "he belongs to her dead or alive. If I were to link my fate with his, how could I meet her silent reproaches at Heaven's gate. He should respect her memory more than to think of marrying me. If I were he I could not forget what she had been to me."

Lady Clementina regretted her niece's decision, but she did not urge her further, hoping that when recent events were not so fresh in her mind she would think and act differently.

The conversation was interrupted by Fritz, who came into the room, making an apology for looking for an alpenstock, or long pole with a point at the end, used in climbing mountains. He wanted to go some distance up the side of the Alpenschloss before the darkness came on, he said.

Fritz was a little man, thin and wiry, looking as if he had a great reserve of strength and an indomitable energy; his face wore an anxious expression, evidently he was ill at his ease.

"What takes you up in the mountain so late in the day?" asked her ladyship.

Fritz at first hesitated to reply, but being pressed, answered that he was anxious about a mass of snow which hung directly over the village.

"It has been very warm to-day," he added. "The sun had unusual power, and we simple folks, madame, live always in dread of the avalanche. If I find there is any danger we will all move away."

"Bless me," said her ladyship; "I shall be quite nervous until you return."

Viola did not seem to take any interest in what they were talking about, perhaps she did not hear them; her thoughts were far away. She was thinking of the bereaved husband, of the corpse in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, of Bertie Conyers, and wondering why things happened as they did in this cold, hard world.

"There may be no cause for alarm, lady," continued Fritz. "Some lumps of snow fell to-day; the channels of the streams are full of water, and a warm haze is rising from the valley. These are all signs. It is my duty to make all sure."

Lady Clementina fully agreed with him, and declared that she should not go to bed—sleep was out of the question under the circumstances—until he returned.

So Fritz took his alpenstock and started up a circuitous path used by the goats and the mountaineers. After a couple of hours' climbing over ground well known to him, he came to the spot where a heavy mass of snow, several tons in weight, hung upon a shelving plateau. Night had fallen, but the moon had risen, making all things as clear as day. Its pale rays were refracted in bluish prisms from the surface of the virgin snow.

Fritz started and became more grave, his inspection showed him that the mass had moved

several feet, for he had private marks to go by. The danger, then, was imminent. It behoved him to hurry with all speed back to the village and warn the people.

There would be no safety in sleeping in a house that night. They must all go away, for the avalanche would assuredly fall. His practiced eye told him that it was only a question of time.

Without wasting one of the precious moments he started on the homeward track, and descended with the skill of a chamois, never missing his footing, though it was simply marvellous how he avoided doing so, and reached the valley about ten o'clock.

The lights in the houses glimmered faintly about a mile in front of him. Courage, brave Fritz, you will be in time yet to save those who are near and dear to you.

Suddenly he was confronted by a lady who was riding a mule. She stopped him, saying she had lost her way, she was afraid. It was only that afternoon that she had come over from Berne to have a look at the picturesque valley of Drachenfels, and wishing to go back, she had, she feared, taken the wrong turn. Nor was she mistaken, for Fritz pointed out to her that she was travelling in a direction opposite to that she required, and that she would have to retrace her steps.

"Come with me, lady," he exclaimed, "I will put you in the right road presently, but I must go home first, my wife and child are in danger, so are my neighbours, and the strangers within my gates. A moment's delay may mean death."

The lady looked at him in surprise. He seized the bridle of the mule and hastened along at his quickest pace, ever and anon looking up at the mountain doubtfully, as if he fancied it had an unusually threatening aspect that night.

"Will you not explain the cause of your anxiety?" asked the lady.

"Certainly, madame," he answered. "I am Fritz, the guide, and what I do not know about mountain climbing rest assured is not worth knowing. Well, we are going to have the fall of an avalanche to-night, or I am greatly mistaken."

"Mercy on me, to-night! Where will it fall?"

"The village is right in its way. Drachenfels was destroyed once before in the same way. Oh, I pray the great power that I may not be too late. I have a lady and her niece staying with me—a miladi Anglaise, the Lady Clementina Sutton and Miss Viola Sutton. They must not die because my steps are slow."

He caused the mule to stop as he said this, and that was the reason why he did not see a great change come over the strange lady, whose face became perfectly livid. In fact he had eyes just then for nothing but the lights in the village, which each minute were becoming more distinct.

The moon went under a cloud for a brief space, and Fritz failed to see the lady raise a thick whip she had in her hand. It was loaded with lead at one end, becoming a dangerous weapon if energetically used. Taking a good aim she brought it down with cruel violence on his head.

He sank like a stone falling through the air, and measured his length on the sod of the valley. She immediately sprang from the mule and bent over him, satisfying herself that he was stunned. A small canteen of water was strapped to the saddle; with nervous eagerness she undid the straps, which were two in number, letting the canteen roll away.

Then she carefully bound the guide's hands and legs so that when he came to himself he would be unable to move. This done, she looked up. The moon came out of the wrack which had concealed it, revealing the features of Madame Menzies.

"Ha; ha!" she laughed. "Fortune has delivered them into my hands. The stars in their courses fought against Sierra, but the forces of nature aid me in my work. He will not now warn the slumbering village, and the avalanche may fall as soon as it likes."

Madame Menzies remounted the mule, sitting

still as a soldier on picket duty, when his ear is strained to hear some signs of the enemy. She had that day arrived at Berne, where she had no difficulty in tracing the Lady Clementina and Viola to the village of Drachenfels. Without losing time she hired a mule and rode over, but the distance being more than she had calculated upon, she was overtaken by the darkness and had lost her way as we have related.

The meeting with Fritz and the story he told her had determined her upon the course of action she ought to pursue in the interest of her employer—Lord Tarlington. The guide was powerless, and if the avalanche fell it would bury in its fall the victim of her persecution.

For half-an-hour she waited, every nerve strained to the utmost capacity of tension. It seemed an age. All at once a noise like rumbling thunder was heard, high up the mountain, rending the air. It increased in violence and power every moment.

She looked up and saw a black mass descending the side of the Alpenschloss. It was the dreaded and terrible avalanche, which came down with the velocity of an arrow discharged from a bow.

Presently the reverberation ceased. A dull thud was heard, and all was over. Not a sign of the village of Drachenfels was to be seen; it had disappeared from view as utterly as if it had sunk into the ground.

Striking the mule, Madame Menzies started again down the valley, but, strong as her nerves were, she could not repress a shudder as she passed by the heap of snow which marked the spot where the village once stood.

Had she not met Fritz he would have been in time to save all. The atmosphere was filled with particles of frozen snow, a strong wind had sprung up, and she was glad when she reached the high road once more.

"I will try to sleep to-night," she muttered. "My head aches. Bah! why should I not sleep? To-morrow I will telegraph to Lord Tarlington. Soon I shall have my reward. How singularly lucky it was I should meet that man."

This was an opinion that Fritz could not be expected to share.

(To be Continued.)

FACETIÆ.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF TOBACCO.

YOUNG LADY (to young gentleman, who evidently wants to be her fellow traveller, and is holding the door for her): "Is this the smoking compartment?"

YOUNG GENTLEMAN: "Oh, no!"

Y. L.: "Thank you."

(Passes on, and gets into smoking compartment.)

GIVE AND TAKE.

(A lovers' duet.)

HE.

UPON my honour, Celestine,

It really is too bad;

Your conduct's truly shocking been!

Enough to drive one mad.

SHE.

Oh, nonsense, Edward! on my word,

What errors, dear, you make!

These lovers' quarrels are absurd

We ought to give and take.

HE.

Yes, Celestine, that's very well,

And happy might we live,

If you'd your nasty temper quell

And take as well as give.

SHE.

Oh, Edward, Edward, you're unkind

And make my poor heart ache!

Give me a wedding ring—you'll find

I'll precious quickly take.

HE.

Oh, Celestine, my heart you grieve,

And riddle like a sieve;

If you, my dear, will take your leave,
Thy leave I'll gladly give.

SHE.

And would you, Edward, really dare,
To Celestine forsake?

I give you warning, sir, beware!

The law of you I'll take.

HE.

Oh, Celestine, I thought you true,

But you've proved false—alack!

My love I freely gave to you,

But now—I take it back.

You said we ought to give and take,

Well, well, I'm nothing loth,

And though it may my heart strings break.

You see, dear—I've done both.

(And contrary to all precedent the gentleman has the last word.) —Judy.

ONLY HIMSELF TO BLAME.

CUSTOMER: "I say, you know, everything's brutally bad. It used to be much better when I left off coming here."

WAITER: "Well, sir, the gov'nor did try it the other way as long as he could, in the hopes o' keepin' of you an' the other gents together, even if he lost money by it." —Judy.

HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN.

MISTRESS (haughtily): "Has the general returned yet?"

PAGE (with ill-concealed glee): "Oh, m'm, please, cook says she's just seen him slip down on a bit o' orange peel." —Judy.

WANTED, TO KNOW.

CAN anxiety about the butcher's book be called a "joint concern?"

CAN clumsiness in telling taradiddles be called "Limited Lie-ability?"

CAN the "song of love" of the period be properly said to be Cupid-ditty?

CAN the tune of the smoker be called—Spittoon?

CAN auctioneers be described as (h)amorous men?

CAN bachelors be said to be exceptions from the general rule? —Judy.

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK.

OH—a-James! You can take the dog out for a walk."

"If you please, ma'am, the dog won't follow me!"

"Then you must follow the dog, James!" —Judy.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

OLD PARSON (who had once been curate in the parish): "How do you manage to get on in these bad times, Mr. Johnson?"

FARMER: "Well, sir, about as bad as can be! Last year we lived on faith; this year we're a livin' in Hope; and next year I'm afraid we shall have to depend on charity!" —Punch.

"That's what beats me," as the boy said when he saw his father take the strap down from the accustomed nail.

WHEREAS it used to be the big brother who was feared, now it is the big sister, who wears an ulster and carries an emaciated umbrella.

WHEN a cat gives an entertainment from the top of a wall, it isn't the cat we object to; it's the waul.

"Ah, Tata," cries Toto, enthusiastically, "you are the only woman who knows how to give her heart unreservedly!" "Yes," says Tata, "as all my admirers tell me."

GATE-HINGES strong enough to support two lovers is the latest invention.

REGIMEN.

OLD LADY (to eminent physician): "Tell me, doctor, what do you consider the most important rule of all for health?"

DOCTOR (whose ideas run much on the hygienic properties of soils and air, &c.): "My dear madame, always live on gravel."

O. L. (whose thoughts take a more gastrono-

mie turn): "Oh, doctor, I'm sure I couldn't digest it!" —Punch.

MANNERS.

MASTER GEORGE (a very naughty boy, to new French nurse): "Caroline, comprenny-vous l'onglay?"

C.: "Non, Monsieur Georges."

M. G.: "Quel dommage! Pas un mot?"

C.: "Pas un mot, Monsieur Georges."

M. G.: "Alois apporty-moi mes Bottes, si vous play, you old beast!" —Punch.

THE PEARL OF THE OCEAN;

OR,

THE AVENGERS FOILED.

CHAPTER VIII.

For a long time the thought of Reno troubled Sir Richard Morton, and by night his sleep was disturbed by visions of dark, glittering eyes and strong threats of vengeance. But as time passed on, and Reno was seen no more in that vicinity, he fell into a quiet state of mind regarding her, and solaced himself with the thought that he had not been so wicked after all.

To do him justice, he would much rather have provided for the support of the girl and her child, but as she had seen to put that entirely out of his power he tried to feel justified in making no effort to discover her. He sunned himself in the smiles of Lady Alice, and at the end of a year the wedding day was fixed. It was to be on the first morning of the new year.

Sir Richard, to his credit be it said, had made a clean breast of the matter to Lady Alice, and she forgave him because she loved him. It was not a very agreeable subject to speak of to a betrothed bride, but Richard knew it would come to her ears some time, and preferred to tell her with his own lips.

The preparations for the wedding were on a scale most magnificent. The Earl of Manvers was wealthy and proud, and he did the handsome thing by the last daughter he had left him beneath the family roof.

Guests numerous and distinguished were invited to Manvers Hall for weeks prior to the coming of the New Year, and the grand old house rang with songs and laughter and gay voices.

On the last night of the old year, while the young people were dancing in the great entrance hall, two wandering minstrels at the door craved the hospitality of the earl for the night. On such occasions it is not the custom to turn anyone away, and they were admitted, and made comfortable by the wide fireside.

One of them was a young man whose face was almost completely concealed by the long black hair and beard he wore, but more than once Lady Alice found herself trying to repress the involuntary shudder that would creep over her when she met the baleful gleam of his dark eyes.

The other was an elderly man, with a pale face, stooping shoulders, and hair white as snow. They both played unusually well on the violins they carried, and the gay dancers did not cease to congratulate themselves on the good fate which sent them to the Hall that night.

Suddenly, while the festivities were at their height, as Sir Richard was passing toward the door, perhaps for the purpose of seeing if the stars foretold a fair day for his bridal, the younger of the two minstrels sprang from his seat, and drawing a long knife from his bosom, turned Sir Richard by the throat.

"Remember that the watchfulness of the Zinn never sleeps," he cried, hoarsely. "Remember Reno Burns!"

He lifted the knife above the heart of Richard,

who caught the blade in his hand and turned it dexterously aside.

At this, the elder man rushed upon him, but Richard, breaking from them both, managed to seize a bludgeon from the wall, and with one well directed blow felled the elder to the ground.

By this time a score of men had come to the rescue, and in a few moments the young assassin was bound hand and foot. Sir Richard's hand had been fearfully cut by the sharp blade of the dagger, but half the pain was not felt because the wound was bound up by the soft fingers of Lady Alice. An examination of the elder man proved him dead. The blow had cloven the skull.

When Richard came to look more closely at the two men who would have taken his life, he had no difficulty in recognising them as Guido Burns, the brother of Reno, and her father. The old gipsy was buried in a remote corner of the Manvers estate, and the younger committed to prison.

The wedding-day dawned bright and cloudless, and nothing occurred to mar the joyous occasion. Sir Richard took his beautiful bride home to Morton Manor, and would have been as perfectly happy with her as one can be in this world if it had not been for the thought of poor Reno, which would intrude upon him in his very happiest moments.

Guido Burns was tried for an attempt on the life of the young nobleman, found guilty, and it was expected would be condemned to execution, but the jury who decided his case were men with daughters of their own, many of them, and they thought that, owing to the palliating circumstances of the case, transportation would be sufficient punishment.

They could not but acknowledge that young Burns had some reason for hating Sir Richard Morton. So the young man was transported for a term of years, and the affair was smoothed over, and forgotten by all except those immediately concerned.

Two years after this marriage Lady Alice bore her husband a daughter, which she christened Edith Alice. Upon this child the parents lavished an affection which was almost idolatry. She was the light of the household, and the little autocrat before whom all the household willingly bowed down.

A lovelier child had never been seen, and Edie was in a fair way to be ruined by the love and indulgence bestowed upon her. From the time of Edie's birth Lady Alice began to be restless and uneasy.

She remembered that the hatred of a gipsy never knows diminution, and she felt impressed with the idea that in some way Reno Burns would obtain her revenge on Sir Richard through this child of his love.

Sir Richard felt something of the same uneasiness, though in a lesser degree, but the result was that little Edith was as closely watched as ever was any prisoner in dungeon cells. She was never allowed to stir a step without some attendance, and so apprehensive did Lady Alice feel for her safety that she could not sleep unless Edith was in her arms.

Until after Edith was three years old nothing occurred which justified these extravagant fears. Alice had almost begun to feel a sort of safety, and Sir Richard had got so comfortable in regard to it that he was quite in the habit of joking his wife on how whimsical she was.

One night, while her husband was absent in a distant town, Alice was awakened by the keen consciousness that there was someone in her chamber.

She looked around, but saw nothing unusual. There was no lamp shining, and the night was moonless, but one bright star shone in through the partially undrawn curtain. All was still as death.

Edith slumbered quietly on her arm, and Lady Alice became convinced that her strange feelings were caused by uneasiness at the absence of her husband.

She closed her eyes, and tried to sleep, but she could not keep them closed. She found herself watching with intense anxiety the broad square of light which marked the location of the window.

And while she watched some dark grim figure stole across that square of light, shutting out the gleam of that solitary star, and darkening the room so suddenly that the gloom was almost palpable.

Alice heard the rustle of a woman's garments over the carpet, the low suppressed breathing of someone in whose breast some strong passion was raging, and obeying her instincts, she slipped out of the bed, holding Edie closely to her bosom, and suffering an agony of terror lest the child should wake and cry out.

She heard the stealthy step glide to the bedside, and then she saw plainly an arm uplifted high, and then followed a blow, swift and unerring as fate! She heard the knife, for it was a knife, penetrate the sheets and strike the mattress, and then she knew no more.

When she came to consciousness, she was lying on the floor cold as stone, and Edie was mourning for "mamma" pitifully by her side. So she got upon her feet, alarmed her maid, and through her the household search was made; but it was too late.

No trace remained of the midnight visitor—save the cut bedclothes, and a long lock of jet black hair caught in a hook which fastened the window casement. It was plainly evident that the intention had been to murder the mother and the child; and only the interposition of Providence in causing Alice to awake when she did prevented the accomplishment of the deed.

And it was also evident that the would-be murderers had escaped through the window, which was found unfastened. Her hair had probably been caught by the hook, and she had not dared to stop to disentangle it, for it was torn out by the roots.

The proper authorities were put upon the watch, but their investigations amounted to nothing. After that Sir Richard never left his wife. All his business from home was transacted by an agent. He spent his life in watching over the safety of Lady Alice and her child. And it seemed utterly impossible that any harm should come to them from without, so closely were they guarded.

Six months and more passed, and Edith showed symptoms of disease, or her parents fancied she did. Alarmed instantly for the welfare of their darling, they set out for London with her, and had the advice of a physician.

He said that nothing ailed the child except a too close confinement, and advised the tonic of sea air and bathing. So they went with her to Margate. And there one day occurred the catastrophe they had so long and zealously guarded against.

Edith was left alone for a moment in her room at the hotel, and when her mother went up to watch her slumbers, she found the little crib empty. Her shrieks alarmed her husband, who rushed to the spot, to find his worst fears realised.

Well, to cut a long matter short, no trace could be found of the child. Search long and close was made; large sums of money were expended, and fabulous rewards were offered for the recovery of Edith, but without avail.

No clue to her could be obtained. Lady Alice was sure that the gipsy girl's vengeance had spirited her away; but what her fate had been must remain a mystery. Beneath the terrible bereavement the young mother faded and drooped; her constant cry was for her child, and Sir Richard, looking on her pale face and attenuated form, could not help feeling that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN NOYES took his wife and Pearl to Sheffield, and placed them there with Mrs. Schuyler, a sister of Mrs. Noyes. Mrs. Schuyler was a very fashionable and wealthy widow, childless and alone in the world, and she was de-

lighted with the prospect of chaperoning so beautiful a girl as Pearl.

As soon as she saw her she decided that she would be the belle of the season; and the next thing to being a belle herself, a woman likes to be the mother or guardian of one.

Before Pearl had been half an hour in her house Mrs. Schuyler had begun to query in her own mind whether pink with white roses, or blue with primrose-coloured pansies, would be most becoming to her fair young guest on the occasion of her debut in upper-tendom.

Pearl rebelled against the life she was expected to lead, for she had hoped and prayed that she might be left alone with her wretchedness, but after a brief struggle she yielded. It was no use to oppose such a woman as Mrs. Schuyler.

She submitted to be dressed and adorned, without expressing the slightest interest in the matter, and when she was taken abroad and introduced to strange people who petted and admired her, she found herself wondering frequently how she ever managed to say anything interesting enough to keep them for a moment at her side.

In the kind of life that was opening before her, and in which so many women find satisfaction, Pearl felt no delight. Under other circumstances perhaps it might have been different.

But for her existence had lost its charm. She had been cheated out of a woman's choicest blessing, the love of the man she had loved, and there was nothing more to look for.

The picture of Max Livingstone, the only thing she preserved which he had given her, she always kept next her heart. She had a sort of superstitious fancy that the pain she felt there constantly was not so sharp and bitter when the shadow of his face rested there.

Her first appearance in society under the chaperonage of Mrs. Schuyler was a decided success. No young lady that season had attracted half so much attention.

And, in truth, Pearl was very beautiful in her dress of pink glaze silk, with an overskirt of filmy white lace, looped up with snow-white roses and green leaves. She wore no other ornament than these natural flowers, and her hair fell on her white shoulders in its rings of gold, unconfined by comb or band.

Admirers crowded around her. Mrs. Schuyler was beset by young men pleading for an introduction, and, of course, that lady was in raptures. So also, on a more modified scale, was Mrs. Noyes. And rough Captain Hugh, who remained long enough to hear something of the sensation created by Pearl's singular beauty, was a little proud of it as he kissed her goodbye.

"Good-bye, ladies," he said to Mrs. Schuyler and his wife, holding a hand of each, "take care of yourselves, and keep your weather eye open for old Bett Morgan and her son. A sharp look-out at the masthead, you understand."

And with this injunction he started on his voyage.

One fine morning after she had been two months at Mrs. Schuyler's Pearl was taking a walk when she was accosted by a familiar voice.

"Hallo, there! I'm blessed if I haint found you at last. Glad to see ye as if anybody had given me five shillings. The sight of ye would be good for sore eyes, if a feller happened to have 'em! How do you do?" and Pearl's delicate hand was imprisoned in the large paw of Jerry Sawyer.

"Why, Jerry?" she exclaimed, really delighted at meeting her honest old friend, "I am very glad to meet you. When did you make your advent here?"

"My what?"

"Your advent?"

"Haint made none, I guess. Haint made nothing since I arriv here except a brass key to my trunk out of a piece of birch wood, and a row with my washerwoman for tearing all the buttons off my shirts. The man where I put up said I made a dreadful stir at his house t'other night, 'cause I blowed out the consarned little gas figger in my room when I went to bed—but

I had a dreadful time a doing of it—like to have blowed myself in the middle of next week, and the ile smelt the master."

"When did you come here?"

"About three weeks ago. Ye see it got to be mighty dull there at Highfield after you went off, and I missed my nice boarding-house with your ma. So I said to myself, 'Jerry, you might as well see something of the world afore you get old and grey-headed, and keeled up with the rheumatics, so what does I do but sell out my stock of goods to Sam Stevens, my clerk, and come here. I'm in the grocery bizness now. Haint I taking you out of your way?'"

"Not at all," said Pearl; "this is my way home."

"Law, is it? Then I'm going home with a gal, am I? I wonder what marn would say to that! She allus told me to beware of escorting the gals home, because she said gals was pritty apt to take advantage of young fellers that was green. Which was as much as to insinuate that I was green."

"Are you prospering, Jerry?"

"Cute. If any of your folks want anything I've got some articles, and I'll let 'em have anything at just cost."

"Thank you."

"No you needn't not till they get 'em, any how. You haint forgot your nice days, have ye? And you haint growed homely, neither. You're the best looking young woman I've seen since I come here, and I've seen every one there is here. For I've been looking out for you. The captain give me a hint that he should take you this way, and I've been on the watch. I've looked under more parasols than you could shake a stick at from now till the next Bank Holiday. I come pritty nigh gitting my head caved in the other day by a dandy chap, because I trod on the tail of his gal's gowd to bring her to a stand-still while I could peep under her parasol, and see if she warn't you. Fellers here, if ever you've noticed it, is mighty pertierker about having their women folks stared at. 'Spect they're afeared you'll find out how like time they all of them paint themselves."

They had reached the mansion of Mrs. Schuyler, and Pearl asked Jerry to go in.

"Oh, ho! so this is where you put up, is it? Mighty nice and fine, haint it? No, I thank ye. I won't go in to-night. Haint got my 'tother clothes on. And these 'ere trousers of mine is gitting a little threadbare in the knees."

"But you will come soon, won't you, Jerry?"

"Sartin. I'm much obliged to ye. Glad you haint got stuck up like most of the folks that leaves the old family ruff and takes to city life. Good-bye."

Mrs. Schuyler had been peeping at Jerry through the Venetian blind, and gave Pearl a little bit of a lecture on the impropriety of allowing herself to be seen in public with such an awkward specimen of a countryman; but Pearl defended her old friend so warmly that the fashionable lady was fain to yield the point, and consent to his visiting at her house, though she mentally prayed that he might lose his way, or sprain his ankle, or meet with some mishap to keep him away.

But nothing of the kind occurred to Jerry. He became a frequent visitor in Madison Square, and even Mrs. Schuyler became reconciled to him, he was so quaint and amusing in his conversation. Mrs. Schuyler returned one day from a shopping expedition in unusually high spirits.

"Oh, Maggie," she said to Mrs. Noyes, "such a delightful thing has happened. I declare, it is so fortunate that you and Pearl are here!"

"What has happened?" asked Mrs. Noyes, and Pearl laid aside her book with some appearance of interest.

"Nothing more or less than this: There is a real nobleman stopping here."

"Well, what of it?" asked Mrs. Noyes, turning the seam with extra care in the grey wool stocking she was knitting for her husband.

"Seems to me you take it coolly, Pearl," said Mrs. Schuyler, "and it is entirely on your account that I am so pleased with his arrival."

"On my account, Aunt Lizzie? I do not understand."

"How obtuse we are, aren't we? Pearl, you're not a bit like other girls. Why, the Miss Osbornes are crazy over it. And Fanny Tre-lawny has bought a new rose-coloured moire antique all on his account."

"And still I do not comprehend."

"You are a verdant little thing, Pearl. Why this gentleman is wealthy, of course—all noblemen are supposed to be; and he is not more than forty-five years of age, handsome and well-preserved. And then his title! Almost any woman would marry him for that."

"How do you know but he is already married?"

"Oh, there are several things which convince me he is not. He has no lady with him; he wears black clothes and sighs continually. He has either been disappointed in love, or he is a widower. It is so fortunate that your mauve silk is made up. You look so sweetly in it. And Mrs. Sinclair's ball comes off in two evenings more. You must not go to the opera to-night, dear; the glare of the gas is apt to make one's eyes red, and, now that Sir Richard Morton has come, you must keep yourself as fresh as possible for meeting him."

"Really, aunt, I fail to see what this gentleman's arrival is to me."

"Was there ever such a provoking thing? I declare I've a great mind to pull your ears, Pearl Noyes! Why, my dear, I have quite set my heart on your making a conquest of this rich gentleman."

"Mrs. Schuyler!"

"Now don't go to putting on airs, Pearl. You take my breath away when you do. Every girl sets her cap for some man, as a matter of course. How else would she get married?"

Pearl left the room in disgust, and Mrs. Noyes and her sister continued the conversation.

"Pearl is very high flown about some things," said Mrs. Noyes. "You mustn't mind her air. Dear child, she has had some trouble in her day. You know I told you something about a young officer."

"I remember. Poor as poverty, wasn't he?"

"He had his pay."

"Pooh! barely sufficient to find a wife in bread and butter. A girl of Pearl's beauty and attractions ought to ride in her own carriage. I have seen enough of these marriages among poor people. You married poor, Maggie, and you have always remained so."

"But I have never regretted it," said Mrs. Noyes, warmly. "Never! Hugh's love has been worth more to me than all the carriages in the world."

"Oh, I dare say. Love is a very fine thing, provided there is everything else along. It is pretty to talk about, and sounds well in a story book. But it will not fill the coal-cellar, nor the flour-barrel, nor the larder with meat and vegetables, nor hire an Irish girl to scrub the kettles. And then a beautiful woman must dress, you know. Goodness, Maggie, I should have died long ago, if I had been hived up in a little out-of-the-way country place as you have been, with only one silk dress a year, I dare say."

"I haven't had a silk dress for six years, Betsy."

"My conscience! and you are still alive. Well, I never! But don't for pity's sake call me Betsy, it is so horribly vulgar. Call me Lizzie."

"Your name is Betsy, sister."

"I know that's the old-fashioned name of Elizabeth. There was Queen Bess, you know."

"No, I didn't know her, I think," said Mrs. Noyes, reflectively.

"Nonsense, who supposed you did know, Maggie? But Pearl must be made to forget this young sailor. I'll warrant he smells of tar, and that his hands are hard and rough as any clod-hopper."

"He is a perfect gentleman, Betsy—I mean Lizzie—and handsomer than any young man I've seen since I came here."

"Oh, well, beauty in a man don't amount to much. Pearl will soon forget his existence. Wouldn't it be something worth while for her to

party a nobleman? Lady Pearl Noyes Morton. How grand it would sound."

"But I do not understand about this secret Pearl shares with Best Morgan, Sister Lizzie. It has changed Pearl from a careless, free-hearted girl to a sad, dispirited woman. Don't you observe that she takes no interest in anything we arrange for her? She submits to it, but I can see that she is wearied by it, and all the fresh soft colour that made her so lovely a year ago is gone. Oh dear, dear, I wish she had never seen that dreadful woman."

"Tush, Maggie! Why, you are as nervous as any old woman of eighty. Girls make a great ado over a little thing. This secret is just nothing at all, I'll be bound. The old hag told her fortune, and predicted death, or disappointment, or something of the kind. They are up to all such tricks. It's nothing of consequence, depend upon it."

"I wish I could believe it," said Mrs. Noyes, sighing. "Yes, Bet—I mean Lizzie—I wish I could believe it."

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. Sinclair's party was a splendid affair. The company was the most recherche that could be gathered in the city; distinguished men, and beautiful women; but among them all there was none so fair as Pearl.

Wherever she moved the eyes of the gentlemen followed her in admiration, and the rival beauties got very green with envious jealousy. She wore a mauve silk; and the quaintly-carved cushions which had been Captain Hugh's parting gift to his daughter.

But the hero of the assembly was Sir Richard Morton. He did not arrive until late, and his entrance created a powerful sensation. Fair ladies blushed and flattered their fans; and beamed upon him in a way which showed they were perfectly anxious of looking charming, but their gaitianness produced very little impression on the tall, grave-faced man, who in his sad eyes and on his furrowed face showed many a sign that he was acquainted with sorrow.

Mrs. Schuyler manoeuvred for an introduction and obtained it, as she generally did everything she desired to obtain. After a little indifferent conversation, Sir Richard's eyes fell upon Pearl, who was promenading on the arm of Hal Sinclair.

"Who is that lovely creature with the golden hair?" he asked, eagerly.

"Which one did you refer to?" questioned Mrs. Schuyler, counterfeiting the most profound ignorance.

"She understood her game," said Mrs. Schuyler.

"As if there could be more than one!" said Sir Richard. "I mean the young lady with her own hair, and the diamonds on her arm."

"Oh, that's my niece, Miss Pearl Noyes."

Mrs. Schuyler was in raptures—she could have hugged somebody, if it had happened that any one had been present on which it would have been etiquette to have indicated such a demonstration.

"Your niece! Indeed, madame, you are fortunate. Allow me to solicit the favour of an introduction."

"With pleasure," said Mrs. Schuyler.

And taking the arm Sir Richard offered, Mrs. Schuyler went over to the window where Pearl and her escort had passed to admire a statue of a hero growing in a marble vase.

"Your niece, I think you said?" queried Sir Richard, with a strange tone of interest in his voice.

"Yes."

"Is she an orphan?"

"Oh, no."

Mrs. Schuyler had decided that it would not be policy to acquaint this haughty nobleman, who doubtless believed in birth and blood of Pearl's uncertain parentage.

"She is the daughter of—of an officer in the navy, Captain Hugh Noyes."

You see this lady did not hesitate over a little white falsehood to further her interests. By

this time they had paused before the young girl, and Mrs. Schuyler presented Sir Richard, Young Sinclair gracefully made his congé, and Mrs. Schuyler remembered an engagement to take a game of whist with old Mr. Thirstane, and so Pearl and Sir Richard were left alone.

Looking back upon that evening in after days Pearl could never recall any of the conversation that passed between them. She knew that they both sat together in the deep embrasure of the window and talked of many things, until the envious looks of the company warned them that there were others who expected attention.

She knew that she felt as if she had known Sir Richard Morton in some far away day—the very sadness of his smile was familiar, and the sound of his voice thrilled her like the notes of some old forgotten melody.

On his part this girl had for him a most wonderful and singular fascination. He wanted to look into her eyes and listen to her voice for ever; he felt that he would never weary of it. He longed to take her white hands in his, and win that golden head to rest on his shoulder. And still, he knew that he did not love her as a man loves a woman he wants to be his wife. It was a love without passion—pure, earnest and strong, like that which a father feels for his child.

He asked permission to call on her as he handed the ladies into their carriage, which was readily granted.

Pearl went up to her chamber that night in a curious frame of mind. She could not analyse her feelings. She took out the picture of Max Livingstone and kissed the responsive lips. If she loved him with her whole soul, what meant that powerful interest she had taken in Sir Richard Morton?

She was angry with herself for thinking of him now—in this hour which she always devoted to thoughts of Max—the hour in which she knelt before God and asked his blessing upon the one love of her lifetime—lost to her for ever. The door opened softly, and Mrs. Schuyler entered.

"What, up yet?" she exclaimed. "You should be in bed, Pearl, refreshing your roses for the morrow. Has not the evening's entertainment justified my predictions?"

"In what manner?"

"Don't pretend to be so stupid. Of course, you understand me. Sir Richard was as attentive as one could wish. I congratulate you on your conquest, my dear."

"Don't," said Pearl, deprecatingly, "it seems to me sinful to think of him in that way."

"A sin! Nonsense! What else you, Pearl? Any other young lady would be half crazy over such a triumph; and here you are, as I live, looking almost ready to cry over it."

"No, no, Aunt Lizzie; not as bad as that. But I respect the gentleman too much to feel willing to hear his name used so lightly."

"Respect him? Then he pleases you?"

"He is a very agreeable gentleman."

"All that a woman could require. And you will marry sometime, Pearl?"

"Never."

"Fiddlestick! A young girl like you, condemning herself to spinsterhood is simply ridiculous."

"Aunt, there is an obstacle in the way of my marrying which nothing can remove."

"All obstacles can be surmounted, Pearl."

"Not this one. And besides, there is only one man in all the world that I could ever marry."

"Who is he? That young sailor fellow, I warrant, who ran away and left you as soon as the gossips began to trifle with your name?"

"Aunt, he did not desert me," said Pearl, her cheek flushing with indignation, "he would have stood by me, strong and steadfast through everything. I sent him away. I cut the bonds which held us together, and he could do nothing but submit."

"How prettily that all sounds. Pearl, my love, when you get indignant you are absolutely magnificent. I declare, I have half a mind to train you up for the stage. You would make your fortune there."

"My fortune is already made," said Pearl, sadly, "to suffer and endure, with all the resignation I can, whatever Heaven sees fit to put upon me."

"Pearl, what is this mystery? Tell it to me, child."

"I cannot. Do not speak of it. If you knew—oh, Aunt Lizzie, if you only knew how it distresses me, you would never allude to it again."

"Well, well, don't feel badly, dear. I daresay it is some foolish enough thing. The old witen told your fortune, or something of that sort, I suppose. Let all pass. It doesn't amount to anything. But I want you to promise me something, will you?"

"Yes."

"Sir Richard Morton will call to-morrow, and I want you to promise that you will not then, nor at any other time, intimate to him that you are not the child of Captain Noyes."

"I see no reason for discussing my lineage with the gentleman," said Pearl.

"Of course not, dear. But then, you know, such things will come up in the course of conversation sometimes. Will you promise me?"

"Certainly, aunt, if you wish it."

"Go to bed now, and sleep sweetly. Pleasant dreams," and kissing her fair cheek, she withdrew.

Sir Richard Morton did call the next day, and made himself so agreeable, that Mrs. Schuyler found herself sighing that she was not ten years younger—in which case she might perhaps stand a chance of making her name Lady Elizabeth Morton.

But the nobleman's interest was all centred in Pearl—she felt attracted towards him—and who yet felt as if it was her duty to avoid him on all occasions when the thing was possible.

He gave her no chance to practice this avoidance. Her coolness did not repulse him. He was mindful of her happiness always—mindful of her tastes—so attentive to her wishes even before they were expressed, that she only could be courteous and kind to him at all times.

People began to talk the matter over closely as a settled affair. And envious young ladies discussed Pearl, and discussed her thoroughly, as only one woman can dissect another.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

A GENTLEMAN.

THERE is no out and dried receipt for a gentleman. A gentleman is a gentleman, and there's an end of it. He does not want to be anybody else, because he does not recognise a superior, save of the titular and disciplinary sort. Your vulgar person, or even your person who, without being vulgar, is not a gentleman, is conscious of an inferiority, and periodically labours to conceal it or cloud it. There is no concealing it, and the attempt only exposes the fact more glaringly to view. This sort of person, too, is not calm, not self-possessed; he is fussy, solicitous, domineering by circumstances, instead of quietly settling down to a level with them. The gentleman is quietly equal to any emergency; he never swaggers; he never makes unnecessary apologies or explanations. He takes things as he finds them. Now and then, no doubt, the idiosyncrasies of genius will lend an exceptional fervour to the manner of a gentleman; and Lady Blessington was so unaware of this, she expressed herself surprised that Byron's manner in conversation was not as quiet as she would have expected from a person of his rank. The observation was at once stupid and snobbish. She made no allowance for peculiarity of temperament.

The permission given for the holding of the Volunteer review was traceable to a hint that if the Government stopped the Volunteers the Volunteers would stop the success of the Government candidates in many quarters.



[LOVE AND AMBITION.]

THEKLA'S TROTH: THE STORY OF A SWEDISH SINGER.

Out of doors and alone, Thekla began to realise soberly what had happened. She walked with her eyes on the ground; her heart thumped steadily under her purple jacket. Gradually she left behind her the dull red, low-roofed houses of the desolate village, and plodded on across the plain, towards the steep path that led down the mountain side, where Ulric would come presently with his sheep.

Twilight was shutting down. Thekla's figure was the only moving object in the blue-toned, implacable landscape to which a Swedish April had brought neither verdure nor bloom. Ulric was late that night.

But Thekla was not impatient. And as the moment for disclosing the news to Ulric approached, her sturdy heart fluttered and sunk within her breast.

She had reached the base of the mountain, and she stopped and leaned against the trunk of a lonely pine-tree; blonde, shapely and statuesque in the indigo-coloured atmosphere, and the thought suddenly came to her, "What if Ulric opposed the plan? What?"

Right here, under this same tall, storm-scarred pine, as Thekla well remembered, she and Ulric had plighted troth in just such another chill and sombre twilight not many weeks ago. She looked up.

Ulric was swinging himself down the precipitous path against the black background of pines which seemed to touch the cold, steely sky. He lifted his cap and swung it gaily as he recognised Thekla, and then a slow surprise came over him as he discerned something unfamiliar in her appearance.

His heart sank with a vague, superstitious dread. He stopped singing. The sky grew colder, the pines darker. The path narrowed. The clumsy sheep huddled closer in their descent.

Ulric followed them, with his cap drawn down to his eyes now, and his hand upon his breast. Thekla, with her face upturned, watched them steadily.

"I scarcely knew thee, my fine Thekla," he called out as he approached. "Hast got ready for the fair a week beforehand?"

"I am not thinking of the fair, Ulric. I am ready for a long journey. I have come to tell thee good-bye," she said, in palpitating tones.

Ulric was close beside his betrothed.

"Not to Upsal, Thekla? Hans Tausen is not going to send thee to Upsal with the flax? It is too far."

The suspense and alarm in his strong, vibrant voice frightened Thekla.

"It is farther than Upsal, Ulric. It is America. Brother Gustav has sent for me to go to America."

The young man staggered a step backward, and lifted his eyes to the cold sky.

"To America?" with strong, calm passion; "I will not have thee go to America, Thekla." "Gustav has sent. You shall read his letter. You shall see that it is best," she said, rapidly, taking the letter from her bosom and opening the large sheet. It was too dark to make out the contents, but Thekla had them mostly in her memory.

"Gustav is living in Indiana; that, he says, is one of the best parts of America. He has two children, and Thyra is well. She has a silk dress and bracelets, and keeps a house-keeper."

Thekla had spoken so fast that she had to pause for breath.

"That is good," answered Ulric, coldly. "I am glad that Gustav and Thyra are well."

"And he says," Thekla went on, "that one year in America is better than ten in Sweden. That they have carpets on their floors, and mutton and ale on the table, and—but you will read it all, Ulric. And he has sent the money for my passage; and he says that if I can sing as I used I can earn a couple of money for a song. And I have thought and thought, dear Ulric, and I am going over there to sing, and to save my money, and to send back for thee," and Thekla threw herself against her lover's breast.

Ulric put her away, kindly enough, but with decision.

"You are no longer mine, Thekla. You have taken back your promise."

"Truly, Ulric, I am not yours unless you want me," said the girl, standing before him a little proudly.

A shudder went through the muscular frame.

"Listen, Thekla," said the young man. "America is the unknown. Gustav was a wild blade ever, and Thyra was a light of love in her day. I am older. I know them better than you. Hans Tausen was glad when they went away. America may be better than Sweden for them, but not for you, Thekla; not for me."

"Who knows?" she said, gravely. "How could we be better than we are?" was his answer, with fond, wistful looks in his eyes.

"I can see how," she answered. We are peasants. We are poor. In America we can be noble and rich." There was a passionate indignation in her eyes. "Let me go, Ulric, when I may. What are a few months of separation when life is before us? To think of money for a song! How easy it is to sing."

She snapped her fingers blithely. He sighed heavily.

"We can think of it, at least. We can think of it. Why do you talk as if it was to be settled in a day?"

"It is all settled, dear Ulric," she said, penitently. "Peter Jansen brought the letter at daybreak, and offered to wait till evening and carry me back in his boat. His granddaughter and all her folks are ready to sail, and I am to go with them. Only think, Ulric, how much better that will be than going alone."

Ulric was silent. His broad, massive form stood sculptured in the darkening air. His dams were bleating about him, making white patches against the ground. Suddenly he stretched his hand toward his betrothed.

"Good-bye, Thekla," he said, hoarsely, "good-bye"—he turned his face from her—"for ever," he added.

"No," she cried, her voice ringing out in the lonesome spot. She clung to his outstretched arm. "Hear me, Ulric. I love you. I will never love another man. If I leave you, it is to better our lot. And one day you will thank me for it. One day—unless you forget me, Ulric, when I am away, and plight you troth to some other woman—"

"Good-bye, Thekla," he repeated, "for ever."

"It is you, then, who say it, Ulric," she cried, indignantly.

"What do I say?" He broke down and

sobbed. "Oh, Thekla," reaching his arms toward her retreating form—"Thekla, stay with me."

They heard voices through the darkness calling and wondering:

"Thekla! Thekla!"

"They are seeking for me," she cried, clinging to her lover, "and I must go."

"Stay with me," he implored. "The wool is thick and fine this year, Thekla, and the farmhouse is empty and mother is old. The price of the grain will buy your wedding-gown, Thekla."

"Ah, yes," laughed the approaching voices; "where Ulric's flock is, there we will find Thekla. Come, come, girl. Peter's boat is ready, and so is the tide. The mother has cofied the box."

"Thekla will not go, Hans Tausen."

"Tush, lad, it is her chance. Can't thee trust thy sweetheart across the water as well as across the hills? If I were as young as you are, I'd get away from this thankless sod, if it is the sod of Sweden."

He reached his hand toward his daughter.

"Dear, dear Ulric, I will send thee a letter before I sail. And I'll be true—across the water, as father says, as if it was only across the hills. And I'll send, Ulric, and you shall come, and we will be happy," and she was sobbing upon his breast.

Hans Tausen tightened his hold upon his daughter's arm, as one having authority.

"Come over on Sunday and read Gustav's letter," he said to Ulric; "and good-bye now, and dry your tears, turtle-doves."

"I was young once," said Peter Jansen, swinging his lantern.

Ulric and Thekla clasped hands an instant. An instant her soft cheek was pressed to his, and then she was following her father toward the village, while Ulric, dumb, dazed, heart-broken, plodded drearily in the darkness after his sheep.

By the dark waves of the rolling sea,
Where the white-sailed ships are tossing free,
Came a youthful maiden, pale and sorrow-laden.
With a mournful voice sang she,
"Oh, take me back to Swedish land,
My own, my dear, my native land."

"My own, my dear, my native land," said Thekla, passionately, in her broken accents, her blue eyes lifted to the evergreen arches that flamed the stage which stood in Gustav Tausen's public garden.

I'd brave all dangers of the main,
To see my own dear land again.

In a voice whose pathos was genuine. "My own dear land again," dropping her head and producing an unusual effect.

The motley audience applauded, and called for more. It was a hot summer night, and the garden was crowded. People were sitting on the grass and around the tables, and the waiters were busy in serving them.

Despite the applause, Thekla did not stop. She descended from the stage to the place behind it called her dressing-room, flung herself upon a wooden settee, and sat moodily indifferent to what was going on about her.

She was dressed in a blue muslin dress with a gold border around the short skirt, scarlet kid boots on her feet, her fair hair hanging in thick plaits to her waist, her beautiful arms and shoulders very bare. At one end of the apartment into which she had come, through an open door, Madame Tausen was nursing a baby and superintending the washing of glasses by the somewhat disorderly waiters.

"You must sing again, Thekla," cried Gustav, entering in haste. "Don't you hear that they are hissing the Marionettes and calling for Thekla?"

"Let them call," she answered, not lifting her eyes. "I'll not sing any more."

"Hey-ho, Gustav, is that the way she talks? It is time, then, that she knew that business was business," cried Madame Tausen, from her place, fanning herself excitedly.

"Go, then, dear Thekla," besought her brother.

"Hark, they break my glasses. They say I deceive them because you sing but once."

"They break our glasses!" echoed madame, shrilly, shaking her big fan at her sister-in-law; "and you shall pay for them."

"Be quiet," said Thekla, doggedly. "Didn't you hear, Gustav? I'll sing no more."

"Make her," cried the incensed Thyra, rising with threatening gestures, and disturbing her baby, who screamed indignantly, while from without they heard the crashing glasses hurled at the retreating Marionettes, and cries of "Thekla—a song!"

Gustav sprang to intercept his wife's attack upon his sister, and Thekla, mistaking his gesture, started to her feet in an attitude of self-defence.

"What the deuce are you up to here?" called a voice, whose owner approached at that moment through the dim passage leading to the stage. "Tausen, where are you? Why don't you stop the row?"

"Ah," grunted Gustav, miserably, "it is Mr. Jennings, at this unlucky moment. Thekla"—in a piteous voice, clasping his plump hands—"he will turn me out if there is a row. For pity's sake go and sing. How will I get a living if he turns me out of the garden?"

Thekla, already drawn to her height, folded her bare arms across her breast and waited the arrival of the owner of the place, whose name she recognized, with glittering eyes and set teeth.

"Mein poor little sister is so tired and frightened that she cannot sing again, Tur," blubbered Gustav, apologetically.

Mr. Jennings stepped gingerly along the planks. He was a well-dressed, dark-eyed, languid-looking man.

"Well, where's your head, lubber? Why don't you go on the stage and tell them so; tell them she'll sing by-and-bye. Get along with you, before they tear things down."

Madame Tausen, having arranged her toilet and quieted her child, was mincing coquettishly to and fro. Thekla stood still with her folded arms and defiant eyes. Harry Jennings looked her over somewhat apprehensively, and then asked, with a patronising air:

"Well, Mam'selle Thekla, is this the way you repay your good brother? Don't you know folks have to be accommodating in this world?"

Thekla returned his glance unabashed.

"Repay my brother," she repeated, slowly, with intense scorn. "What for?"

"Well, sure enough, what for? Why, for—"

"For cheating me—cheating me," she said, with rising passion.

Jennings laughed. He had dealt with prima donnas before. They were always being cheated, he knew.

"So you've been cheated, eh, mam'selle? Well, sit down here and tell me all about it. And maybe I can set you right."

"It is not much to tell," said Thekla, and she did not accept Mr. Jennings' invitation to sit down. "Gustav, he wrote me I could sing and make money in America. I have sung. I want the money."

"Yes, of course. Well, he gives you some money, no doubt. What you mean is, that it isn't enough. You want him to give you more."

"He gives me no money, no money!" said Thekla, stormily. "More than one year ago I came, and not yet have I sent a letter home to Sweden."

"How is this?"

Mr. Jennings appealed to Gustav, who had quieted the audience and returned from the stage in time to listen to his sister's charges.

"I am a poor man," said Tausen, mournfully. "All my earnings, all my savings I sent to Sweden to bring Thekla to America."

"And of course she should pay him back," interposed Madame Thyra. "And for her dresses as well. Look at the things he buys for her. Look! Necklaces and silk stockings, as if she was a princess. And for her board—shouldn't she pay for her board, I'd like to know?" and she snapped her fingers in triumph in Thekla's face.

"I don't want all. I want a little," she said, in a despairing calm. "I want to send a letter."

Jennings took some silver from his pocket, a shilling or so.

"Well, Mam'selle Thekla, I'm quite curious to hear your voice, having somewhat of a musical taste. Now, if you will go forward and sing a song, you may have this money," and he offered it upon his smooth, open palm.

Thekla eyed him an instant with suspicion. Then with a swift motion she swooped the coin.

"I will sing for money," she said, gravely, and she walked away toward the stage.

Jennings hastened to take a place with the audience. Tausen and his wife looked anxiously at one another. The handsome Thyra's face was blazing.

"You'd best put a stop to that!" she cried, threateningly, to her husband.

Gustav uttered a sound between a grunt and a groan. Thekla stood flushed and exultant upon the stage. The audience clapped. Jennings leaned back critically in his chair.

"Deuced good-looking," was his mental comment, as he gazed at the girl.

Thekla was inspired by the money she held in her hand. Hitherto she had not been able to send a letter, even to Ulric. Her brother had his own motives for preventing a correspondence, which, as much as his greed, had prompted him to deny Thekla the handling of a penny; and she, ignorant and inexperienced, had no way of defying him.

But now she had the money—whose value she had so dearly learned. Never before had Thekla sung as she sung that night. The foreign, music-loving audience sat breathless till the last strain died away. Then they cried and cheered lustily, while Thekla, overcome by the intense excitement, stood still with her face buried in her hands.

"Ulric—Ulric," she sobbed, softly.

And the curtain fell upon her standing there.

Jennings had hastened behind the scenes, and was talking with the Tausens. He had nearly lost a prize through inattention. But he must not let them suspect what an idiot he had been.

"Why don't you give her money, and keep her contented?" he said, sharply, to Gustav.

Tausen shrugged his shoulders.

"When she gets money she sends for her sweetheart. Then I shall make nothing more out of her."

"Ah," said Jennings, "a sweetheart in Sweden, eh? That's right, Gustav, keep him there. You are a clever fellow after all. But I can't have her imposed upon, you see. Now I've been turning over a plan. You're Thekla's legal guardian, you know. Well, I'll give you a hundred pounds for her services for the next three years. I'll give her some training, and put her in the way of concerting. She's too good for a garden, you understand."

"Thekla have great genius," groaned Gustav, suspiciously.

"She has nothing of the kind. She has a fair, fresh face and a voice to match. Nothing more. You may accept my offer on the spot, or you may reject it. In either case, I shall have nothing more to say to you on the subject. You can't make more than I offer you, out of her; you may make less. A bird in the hand, you know."

"I'll let you know to-morrow, Tur," muttered Tausen, in dismay.

"Now or never, sir," said Jennings, peremptorily. "Don't be a simpleton. You've got back Thekla's first cost. Send and bring some more of them over, and bless your stars to get such a piece of merchandise off your hands."

"I think I can trust you, Mr. Jennings?" murmured the Swede.

"Trust me, you idiot. Why not?"

"My sister must not come to harm, Tur."

"Get out, you gaby! A lot you do to protect her."

Tausen, between greed and caution and terror, yielded to his principal's plans, and be-

fore the two men parted a contract was signed according to Jennings' proposal. Thekla herself proved nearly indifferent to the exchange. She had come to mistrust her brother and to dislike his wife. Jennings had prepossessed her by giving her the means of sending the long-delayed letter; and as to evil designs, she had no fear of them, because she was ignorant of their possibility.

It is three years later. The season is October. The scene, a handsome private parlour of a grand hotel. A soft coal fire burns in the grate. The lace curtains screen the busy panorama of the street. A basket of exotics has just been placed upon the open piano.

And the woman? She is rare and splendid like the flowers. Of perfect stature, with dazzling skin and golden hair, broad, stately shoulders and white, rounded arms. She is dressed in satin; pale blue satin draped with lace, with clusters of blush roses nestling against her bosom and in the folds of her train. She smiles over the flowers, and seats herself at the piano, improvising carefully.

Thekla, for this is Thekla, nods to her guests as they enter without rising. They are rather her judges than her guests. They have come to seal her fate with their professional verdict. They seat themselves quietly and wait. Thekla plays abstractedly on.

Just as the clock strikes the appointed hour, two men enter the room together. One is dark-eyed, pale, irreproachably dressed, a smothered excitement burning for the moment under his habitual languor, a slight nervousness visible in the manner in which he taps a light cane against his polished boots.

Thekla looks at him, but he avoids her eye. It is our old garden acquaintance, Harry Jennings. His companion is a younger man, with long arms, dark flowing hair, and a thin, spiritual face, dressed in a velvet coat. He is only Leopold Franz, Thekla's accompanist, and he walks directly to her side, looking at her with worshipful eyes as they exchange a few words in arrangement of their performance.

Thekla opens her music, and turns an appealing gaze upon her critical audience. But it is nothing to them that she is young and fair. They are concerned only with the promise of money in her chest notes and throat notes, and the rest.

They are habitually suspicious—suspicious of Thekla, still more suspicious of Jennings; alert to detect a bad method, a false tone. Franz begins to play the recitative. Thekla stands ready. Will she fail? It is impossible, she says to herself, impossible.

She thinks it all over in that half minute as she stands there. She thinks of Sweden and Ulric. It is four years since she left him. The money she was to earn so easily has never been earned. And Ulric has never answered the letters which held only empty promises. But now, if she succeeds, she will redeem her pledge; she will prove herself true to her troth. If she succeeds? She cannot fail.

Franz is looking anxiously in her face. The note is struck. Her voice falters huskily for a second, and then swells out like a bird's—free, strong, rapturous, well-sustained. There is silence during the singing. Some non-committal whispers at the close.

Thekla takes another selection, and then another. She sings for an hour. At the end, she lays her music down and folds her arms. It is the same half-defiant attitude with which she waited in the garden.

Jennings, standing before the grate, looks at her stealthily, and remembers it. The guests, managers and maestro rise. They make their polite adieux to the cantatrice one by one. They are all gone but Franz, who sits abstractedly on the piano-stool, his long arms hanging by his side.

"Leo,"—Thekla looks taller and statelier than ever, the roses that nestle against her bosom rise and fall quickly—"did I sing well?"

"I know not, signora. I was deep in thought."

"Unkind Leo, what do you mean?"

"I mean that I worship you, Signora Thekla. That is all. That you are sun and air and life to me. If you succeed, you are removed from me. If you fail—Oh, Thekla, if you fail, I could not help the hope that I—that my love, my work, my life, might somehow atone to you."

She shook her head.

"Nothing could atone to me for failure."

"You want money? I will earn it for you. You want fame? I will be famous yet, Thekla, for your sake."

"Hush, hush, Leopold, for Heaven's sake! I want nothing except to succeed. Ah, you do not know—"

"Yes, I know, I know. You must have satin and lace and velvet to tread on. I know all. I could earn them for you, if I had hope. Dear, beautiful Thekla, let me hope! Not now, perhaps, when you are so brilliant and triumphant; but some day when disappointment have overtaken you, and your beauty is faded and your voice is broken. Then, Thekla, let me hope that you will endure my love."

He was kneeling before her, clasping his flexible hands. She shook her head pityingly.

"You think it will not last? You do not know." He rose to his feet. "It is not your beautiful body, nor your beautiful voice that I love, signora. It is your soul. It is not that I crave to possess you—but only to serve you. That is all, Signora Thekla."

A hasty step without a light tap, and Jennings entered the room. He scarcely noticed the musician.

"I have some important business to discuss with you, Thekla. Are you at liberty?"

"Good morning, Leo," she said, extending her hand kindly. "Come back for an hour from four to five, for practice, if you can."

The pianist bowed; and Thekla and Jennings were alone. He pushed a fauteuil before the fire, and when Thekla had seated herself in her imperial fashion, he placed himself to face her.

"The hour has come at last," he said in a tone of suppressed excitement. "The hour for which I have waited for three long years. To-day, Thekla, your fate is in my power."

Her white hands lay loosely clasped upon her lap. She pressed them quick and hard together, and then resolutely loosed the pressure.

"Be good enough to speak plainly," she said.

"There is no need of many words. Why have I squandered a fortune upon you?"

She shrugged her white shoulders.

"Why have I humoured your caprices, and submitted to your prudence, and guarded and watched you?"

"Doubtless you know your reasons."

"Yes, I know them—only too well. Do you know them, too?"

"I have never imagined that they differed from those of any financier. You considered me a good investment. You expect interest upon interest for what you have spent. You have speculated in training me."

"You are mistaken. I have educated you and indulged and respected you—because I love you."

She shrugged her bare white shoulders again. There was a singular contraction of the pupils of Jennings' black eyes. He turned paler than common.

"Your reception of my avowal is about what I expected," he said, quietly. "I am not disappointed. But—I am prepared for you."

Thekla lifted her eyes with a slight betrayal of alarm.

"We will be practical, if you please, continued Jennings. "I have had a good many fancies among women, but never a grand passion except for you. I will not be thwarted. I intend to marry you. For three years, with this one object in view, I have been your devoted slave. I have paid for your voice-training, for your living, for your clothing, and I have asked nothing in return, except that occasionally you should endure my presence. I hoped that my

devotion would win your love. You have had whatever you asked—"

She interrupted him with a gesture.

"Except money enough to post a letter, or one half hour of liberty."

"True, I took your brother's caution, and prevented your communicating with the beggarly lover whom it seems you left behind; and I have dealt with women too long to imagine that I could trust you farther than I could see you. On the whole, though, I suppose you will agree that I have done well by you?"

"You have imposed upon me a debt which I expect to pay."

"Very good. Pay it—by marrying me to-night."

She stood up, folding the round arms again across the satin bodice.

"To-night? Never!" she said, with distinctness.

"Sit down," said Jennings, quietly. "We have not finished yet."

Thekla resumed her seat.

"I want you to realise that you are entirely in my power. There is no closer trades-union than that of the musical profession. And you could as easily secure an engagement in the planet Jupiter as here in New York in opposition to my influence. Apart from me, you are absolutely without money and without friends. I have taken good care of that. Marry me, and your success is assured. Once before the public you are independent. But unless you marry me, you shall never appear before the public. You shall be questioned like a rushlight. Do you know what becomes of women without homes or friends? That is what will become of you."

"Mercy," she said, softly.

"Be merciful," he retorted, calmly.

Thekla sank back in her chair. "She was as helpless and inexperienced as a child. She had been kept so purposely. Jennings saw that his attack had told. He rose, and lifted her fingertips to his lips with deference.

"It is three o'clock. I will order your lunch now. Franz is coming back to try the new arpeggio with you, and at six I will be here to dine with you. I do not doubt but your decision will be ready."

He left the room, and Thekla sat motionless, as if sculptured in her chair. Lunch was served, dainty and appetizing, but Thekla could not taste it. The alternatives presented to her were like some hideous creatures tugging and tearing at throat and heart.

She ran to her bedroom once, threw on her hat and shawl, and started for the door. But for all she knew, she might be prevented from leaving the hotel. And if she left it, where to turn in all those long wide streets where she had never been alone. She cowered back in her chair before the fire, and waited for Franz.

"I cannot sing," she told him, bursting into hysterical tears when he came.

And then she was so helpless, so alone, she took him into her confidence. A kind of exultation blazed in the pianist's eyes as he heard her confession.

"The chance to serve you has come sooner than I expected, signora, but I knew it would come. Will you trust me? Will you come home with me?"

"How can I get away, Leo?"

"You cannot, in that dress."

"I have another."

"Is it dark and short?"

"Alas, no. It is white—a cashmere morning gown with great wide sleeves. And he has my trunk."

"No matter, signora. I will arrange it."

Poor Franz, it is not easy to arrange things without money. Nevertheless he succeeded in hiring a waterproof cloak from one of the chambermaids, for which he paid his last shilling, and in the early shadows of the autumn evening Thekla and he stole like culprits down the marble stairway of the grand hotel and through the plate-glass door, out of the glare of the gaslight, conscious of suspicious eyes following their movements. They walked on rapidly, for Thekla was chilled by the evening air.

"It is a poor place, signora, to which I must take you. A lonesome musician is not fastidious," said Franz, at last.

"Anywhere, Leo, away from him," returned Thekla, breathlessly.

Off from the thoroughfares into the narrower, darker streets they hastened, till they reached a dingy brick tenement with narrow, unlighted hall and bare, dirty stairs. Thekla had known the meagre simplicity of the Swedish peasant, and the coarse comforts of Gustav's condition, but never before the odious savour of actual poverty.

Unconsciously she grasped her satin skirts tighter, and drew the cloak closer about her, as Leo led the way up and up to a dingy room containing a ricketty piano, piles of music; a cold, rusty stove, an unmade bed, a table on which was a plate of crusts, an empty beer-mug.

"Pardon, signora," he said, imploringly, "for putting such a place at your service. It is only for the moment; to-morrow you shall have at least comforts. I go now to procure a supper, after which we will talk for an hour, and then I shall leave you."

Thekla comprehended at a glance.

"My poor Leo, you have no money for supper, I know."

He smiled proudly. From a peg he reached down his velvet coat, and before his guest could interpose he was gone. Thekla understood all at once the scrape she had got into. She had thrown herself upon Leo's protection, and though she did not doubt his chivalry, she realised the inference he would draw from her conduct. After turning him out of his house and eating up his coat, how could she say:

"Poor fellow, I do not in the least care for you. You bore me ineffably. Good-bye."

The strange people who had peered at her as they passed up the stairs, the dim, dirty place, the starving poverty, frightened her. She stood in the doorway. The dark, cold passage seemed significant of her life. Her heart cried out:

"Oh, Ulric, Ulric, would I had listened to thee!"

She thought she heard Franz returning, but the steps stopped on the landing below. In a moment, however, he would return. She must escape from his hospitalities, his importunities. She drew her cloak tighter. She ran down the first flight of stairs and listened. All was silent. A moment later, and with a beating heart, hungry, shivering, helpless, Thekla stood in the street.

She walked on rapidly. The gloomy, miserable houses frowned upon her. What should she do? To avoid being accosted she walked fast. She trembled with hunger and weakness. She had to sit down upon a door-step to rest. More than once she wished she had stopped in Leo's poor den.

Once, in her desperation, she regretted having left Jennings' protection. The hours were wearing on toward midnight, and still Thekla walked and walked. She was almost bewildered. From time to time she saw visions. The red-roofed houses of her native town; the rushing streams, the purple outline of the hills, Ulric driving his flock down the mountain-side.

She paused for a moment in the blaze of light that streamed from a concert-hall. Some men came out. They were talking in Swedish. Thekla drew aside to let them pass, and then only half conscious of what she was doing, she entered the place, made her way to the proprietor, and spoke in her native tongue.

"If Swedes are here, I want to sing them a song."

The man looked as if he thought her crazy.

"After I have sung, you may pay me if you will, for I am in want; but if you will not, I will go on."

"We are mostly Swedes here," he returned.

"Go and sing."

It was a rough place, with a sanded floor and deal tables, on some of which the remnants of supper still stood. The concert was over, and the stage empty. Such of the audience as remained looked as if they lingered because they had nowhere else to go. There was a man—a

thin, gaunt fellow, who sat with his arms crossed and his head rested upon them—whose way attracted Thekla.

She dropped her cloak and stood in her blue training dress, with the roses on her bosom, just as she had stood before her critics earlier in the day. And she sang the familiar, home-sick Swedish love-song with which she had electrified her audience years before. The weary, drowsy heads before her were lifted. The stolid blue eyes grew bright and moist. She stretched her beautiful pink palms towards them supplicatingly as every man's heart roused as if to answer her demand.

The singer's eyes, however, fastened on one alone—the gaunt form, with the drooped, shaggy head. She saw him quiver and stagger to his feet during the applause; she saw that his lips were pinched and blue and his great hands transparent with want. She sung her song through, however, and then she leaned towards him from the low platform. She extended her hands and fastened her shining eyes upon his face, and cried, in a low, thrilling tone:

"Ulric!"

The man stared at him as if in a dream. His chest heaved. He stepped heavily forward, and turned abruptly back. The vision on the stage did not stir. Gradually he found her. Again, as years before, he shaded his eyes with his cap, as if to distinguish her.

There was a wild laugh which rung through the room. The gaunt emigrant in his peasant jacket, with his unkempt hair, threw his arms above his head. He cried out, "Thekla!" and fell back into his chair.

Two days later, when Jennings, by the aid of a detective, had traced Thekla to a Swedish boarding-house, he found her the lawful wife of Ulric Anderson. But, though Ulric's story was touching enough, it did not touch him. Two years before, the Swede, despairing of ever hearing from Thekla, had sold his possessions and emigrated to America. For two years, barely keeping body and soul together, he had searched for his sweetheart.

"I went wherever they sang songs," he said, "but I began to think I should never find her."

He had a little bag of gold, is transpired, which, no matter what privations he bore, he would not open.

"It is for Thekla when I find her," he said, and held it sacred.

"And what of your debt to me, madame?" Jennings asked, indignantly.

"You will procure me an engagement, and I shall pay it directly," the bride answered, sweetly.

And, not to make a bad matter worse, the impresario adopted her suggestion, and Thekla sung herself to fame and out of debt before the season ended. W. H. P.

IN MEMORIAM.

A LITTLE grave—so very small—

A tiny mound of earth.

'Tis here our tears will ever fall,

'Tis here our woes had birth.

On summer's eve old August hung

Its last sad, brilliant day;

All nature silent anthems sung

That saddened e'en the gay.

'Twas then he passed who sleeps below

This consecrated ground;

He knew not of the grief and woe

That on this earth is found.

Our only child! oh! who can tell

What saddened hearts are ours?

For all too soon the summons fell—

He died before the flowers! D. T. W.

The person who makes hash is apt to mince matters.

STATISTICS.

RUSSIAN STATISTICS.—To realise the virulence of the revolutionary struggle, it is necessary to note the narrow circle in which it is carried on. Some few years ago there were in Russia (excepting Poland), and including the wives and children in each category, 1,200,000 noblemen and civil and military officers, 3,000,000 soldiers, 600,000 merchants, 6,000,000 artisans, 50,000,000 peasants and labourers, 600,000 ecclesiastics, and 25,000,000 Asiatics, making a total of 86,400,000 inhabitants. Of these there could read and write 1,200,000 noblemen and civil and military officers, with their wives and children; 150,000 merchants (one-half the males); 500,000 ecclesiastics (all the males and two-thirds of the females); 1,000,000 artisans (one-third of the males)—total 2,850,000 literates. Accordingly, we have to sit down as the only parties concerned in the struggle for Government power 1,000,000 noblemen and civil and military officers, with their wives and children; 400,000, a medley of merchants, ecclesiastics, artisans, and students (males and females), making a total of 1,400,000, who are politically interested in a nation of 86,400,000.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SPRING SOUP OF EARLY CABBAGES.—Take the hearts of two white spring cabbages well washed, place them for a few minutes in boiling water; take out the cabbages, put them into cold water, drain them, cut them in quarters and remove the stalks, tie each quarter with a piece of thread, put them in some savoury stock, simmer till done enough, lay them in a tureen, and pour the soup over them.

STALE BREAD.—Stale bread will taste comparatively fresh and new if it be put into a cool oven till it is heated gently through. It will take about an hour.

STALE CAKE.—If a sweet cake becomes stale, it may be freshened by the following process: Put it into a box with a closely-fitting lid, place this before the fire, and turn it round occasionally. If the cake is large, cut it into thin slices before heating it. It will be ready for use in about an hour.

SUMMER FRUIT SALAD.—Take one or two kinds of freshly-gathered, finely-flavoured fruit. Pick it, put it into a glass dish, and stir into it a dessert-spoonful of sherry, a dessert-spoonful of water, and three table-spoonfuls of powdered loaf sugar to each pint of fruit. Let it remain in a cool place for an hour or two and serve with cream instead of a tart.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Tennyson spends hours on a single line. But that's nothing. We have known men who spent their whole lives on a single line. They were generally conductors.

There is one "right" on which, thank Heaven, a woman cannot intrench—'tis the glorious boyish privilege of standing on your head and turning somersaults.

The women of the country are about to organise a general protest against the unnecessary and pernicious custom of emblazoning their ages on tombstones.

The Derby is, after all, to be transferred to Gravesend. This year is the last when the race will be run at Epsom, the property on which the racecourse stands having passed into the hands of a gentleman who does not care to encourage racing. The Gravesend course will be the best in England when finished, though that will not be till very nearly the middle of the present year. As a consequence, the Derby will have been run after next May at Epsom for 100 years in succession, and will then cease. The old days of going down to the Derby by road are accordingly well nigh at an end.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STRANGER.—We agree in judgment with you on your matter of taste as to "dear friends," but it is probably of little importance, not enough to be made a point of, since this is the only letter to be written and the body of the letter is unobjectionable. She will, no doubt, come in time to see such things as you do.

"Be to her faults a little blind,
Be to her virtues very kind;
Let all her ways be unconfined,
And put a padlock on her mind."

LOUISA.—Keep on doing the best you can. Your case is a pitiable one; but unless you have personal friends who are wise in such matters, and who could influence your husband in the right way, it will be difficult for you to get any outside help.

H. G.—It is very improbable.

EMILY.—1. The child is only entitled to the mother's name; but under the circumstances, the father not objecting, she can be married in the name by which she has been known to the world. 2. If the matter was settled by the court officials in favour of the plaintiff the fees and expenses incurred would appear on the notice paper sent to the defendant. 3. Obtain a bottle of Gregory's powder from a chemist, and use it according to the directions on the label.

LILLIE M.—We think a blonde, rather nice-looking. Hair, very light chestnut.

EDWIN.—Newton, Wilson, & Co., 144, High Holborn, are the patentees of the invaluable Holograph instrument. Writings, plans, circulars, &c., can be duplicated by hundreds much cheaper and quicker than by any other process. Black ink is used, and the impressions are perfect.

CHARLES.—You will do well to let the lady know that your health is questioned by your physician; and if, knowing this, and, presumably, consulting her friends, the lady is willing to keep the engagement, we see no objection. But before leaving it to the lady's decision it may be prudent to consult your physician as to the prudence of your marrying from his point of view.

JOE.—Very likely.

ISABEL.—According to your statement, you have given the young man reason to suppose that you did not care much for him, and have talked the matter over with a third party, which is never agreeable to a right-minded lover. Under these circumstances, it is hardly to be expected that the young man will feel like apologising for his "distant" behaviour. You can very well afford to "speak first," especially as you look upon him as being so "very nice." It is never very difficult to apologise to "nice" people. They will never expect too much from you.

V. W.—Send further particulars.

OLIVER W.—You have done remarkably well in your acquisition of the English language. By going into a wholesale bookseller's, and looking at all the English grammars they have, you can probably find one that will suit your case.

E. W. D.—See answer to "A Constant Reader" in our number dated March 5.

IRMA G.—1. Hair, light brown, blonde. 2. We should say rather good-looking. 3. To make the hair grow see reply to "Carrie" in our Reader dated Feb. 25.

LILY.—To remove sun freckles, make a lotion composed of chloride of ammonium, one drachm; spring water, one pint; lavender water, two drachms; apply with a sponge two or three times a day.

ROSE.—To treat pimples and black heads in the skin, in the first place attend to your general health, and in the second wash the affected parts, generally the face, with yellow soap and warm water—rain water is best—and apply the soap on a coarse flannel, rubbing well. Wash the soap carefully off, and dry with a soft towel. Iodine of sulphur ointment should be applied every night till the specks disappear.

DORA and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Dora is twenty-three, dark, fond of home and children. Annie is eighteen, fond of music and dancing, fair.

ELOISE, twenty-two, fair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man.

HARRIET and JESSIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Harriet is twenty-three, medium height, Jessie is of a loving disposition, fond of home, tall, fair, domesticated.

EVERLINE S., twenty, handsome, dark, would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty in a good position.

MARY, nineteen, domesticated, fair, medium height, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty-three, dark, good-looking.

EMILY and MARY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Emily is domesticated, dark, fond of home. Mary is nineteen, fond of home and children, tall, dark.

KATHERINE, twenty-two, dark, medium height, loving fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four.

B. B. and F. E. A., two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies. B. B. is twenty-three, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. F. E. A. is twenty-one, fond of home, tall.

HEAVENWARD.

In the meadows, by the woodland,
Rosy, dimpled feet and bare,
Wandering in the dawn of childhood—
A little babe without a care.

Light I caught the passing sunbeams
Through the wicker fingers fair,
Tossed them back upon the meadows,
Threw them on the scented air.

By my side and ever watchful,
Lest my infant feet should stray
To some dark and miry pitfall,
A loving mother led my way.

And as moments sped uponward,
And the childhood hours flew by,
Hopes so bright were often scattered
An life's morning dawn went by.

How she watched and prayed and guided,
Checking off my wilful way,
Till the hours of childhood glided—
Like a scroll they rolled away.

Life's short dream with her now over,
And her work pronounced well done,
O'er the crystal sea they bore her,
To that land beyond the sun.

Oh, her fond regret at parting
When she saw the tears I shed,
But a holy light was streaming
Round her when her spirit fled.

Lo! the gates of gold gleam yonder
In the light beyond the blue,
And bewildering is the splendour
Of the glory shining through.

When I come to lay my burden
By the golden gates ajar,
Weary, footsore, and laden,
Having journeyed from afar,

May I, then, Lord, thou permitting,
Bring my cross—life's bitter home,
And be crowned Christ interceding
With the blessed around thy throne? A. T.

B. D. and L. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. B. D. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, medium height, good-looking. L. S. is seventeen, good-looking.

JOHN and JERRY W., two soldiers, would like to correspond with two young ladies. John is twenty-seven, dark hair, good-looking. Jerry W. is twenty-four, loving, of a loving disposition, fair, fond of music, blue eyes. Respondents must be fond of home, good-looking.

GEORGE H. and WALTER D., would like to correspond with two young ladies. George H. is twenty, blue eyes, loving, medium height. Walter D. is nineteen, good-looking, tall, fond of home.

JOSEPH, twenty-four, light hair, dark eyes, fair, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about nineteen with a view to matrimony.

JACK and TED, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Jack is twenty-three, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing, medium height. Ted is twenty-two, dark, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and fond of home. Respondents must be fair, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition.

S. B. and B. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. S. B. is twenty-one, tall, dark. B. S. is twenty-two, medium height.

HAIRIE and KERRI, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Hairie is eighteen, fair, good-looking, tall. Edith is seventeen, medium height, fond of music. Respondents must be tall, dark, good-looking, fond of children.

ANGELIA, twenty, medium height, hazel eyes, loving, fond of home, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-one, dark, tall, of a loving disposition, good-looking, fond of music.

RALPH, STANISLAW, and ROGER, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Ralph is tall, good-looking, dark, loving, fond of home and children. Stanislaw is good-looking, of a loving disposition, curly hair, fond of home and dancing. Roger is of a loving disposition, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing.

W. G. and G. L., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. W. G. is twenty-four, fond of dancing, dark. G. L. is twenty-one, fond of home.

CARRIE, eighteen, fond of music and dancing, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-two.

EVE and IRENE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Eve is eighteen, fond of home and children, dark hair, hazel eyes. Irene is seventeen, loving, fair, tall. Respondents must be about nineteen, tall.

JENNIE and C. N., two friends, would like to correspond with two mechanics with a view to matrimony. Jennie is fair, good-tempered. C. N. is twenty, dark, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty-five and thirty, fair.

NELLY and POLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen between twenty-two and twenty-four. Nelly is fair, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated. Polly is fond of music and dancing, tall, dark.

EDWARD, ALBERT, and HENRY, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Edward is fair, medium height, good-tempered, hazel eyes, fond of children. Albert is dark, blue eyes, fond of home and music, tall. Henry has brown hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-three, good-looking.

MARY and ROSA, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-three. Mary is eighteen, good-looking, tall, dark. Rosa is twenty, tall, fair, and good-looking.

CLARA and LILLIAN, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen about twenty-three. Clara is of medium height, blue eyes, fair. Lillian is tall, brown hair and eyes, good-tempered.

C. G. G., twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

JONATHAN, eighteen, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, of a loving disposition, dark.

W. L. G., eighteen, fair, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JOE is responded to by—**G. G.,** twenty-one, brown hair and eyes, fond of music, tall, fair.

SAMUEL by—**B. P.,** dark, brown hair, medium height, fond of home and children, loving.

ANGELIA by—**EDWARD L.,** twenty-one, tall, auburn hair, hazel eyes, good-looking.

EMILY by—**GEORGE,** twenty-three, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing.

B. G. by—K. K., twenty-two, auburn hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

S. W. by—ANGELO, twenty-five, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, dark.

ANNIE by—**HERBERT F.,** nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair and eyes, fond of music.

S. G. F. by—RHODA, twenty, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, medium height, domesticated.

JACK by—**EDMUND G.,** twenty-four, fair, tall, loving, good-tempered.

EMILY by—**CHARLES C.,** twenty-seven, medium height, of a loving disposition, brown hair, hazel eyes.

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